The Ghaznavid and Seljuk Turks

Poetry as a source for Iranian history

G. E. Tetley

Routledge Studies in the History of Iran and Turkey

THE GHAZNAVID AND SELJUK TURKS

This new view on aspects of the Ghaznavid and the Seljuq dynasties concentrates on the relationship of the panegyric poets Farrukhī Sīstānī (*c.* 995–1032) and Mu'izzī (*c.* 1045–1127) to the Ghaznavid and Seljuk rulers and dignitaries for whom they wrote. Dr Tetley investigates the reliability of the historical sources.

A solid and impressive work of learning, of interest to scholars in Oriental Studies, Medieval Literature, and History, *The Ghaznavid and Seljuq Turks* is the first extended English study of Mu'zzī, it presents much new material concerning both this little-studied poet and also the better-known Farrukhī. Additionally, there is a valuable exploration of the relationship between Persians and Turks, a highly significant factor during the rule of the two dynasties.

G. E. Tetley, a graduate of the University of Oxford, worked as a linguist at Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham, UK, before embarking on her doctorate.

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PREFACE

The present work is a slightly revised version of my doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Oxford in 2002; the bibliography has not been up-dated. The transcription of Arabic and Persian words and names is as recommended by the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies.* Quotations from ʻUnṣurī's *Dīvān* are from the edition of Yaḥyā Qarīb unless otherwise stated. In all quotations from Muʻizzī's *Dīvān* the textual references are to both printed editions, first Iqbāl, then Ḥayyerī, as Ḥayyerī's edition, though unsatisfactory in several respects, was published in 1983 and is more likely to be available. In the case of the *Seljūk-nāmā* both printed editions have also been quoted, first Afshār's, then the superior but less generally known version in *Jami' al-tawārīkh* (see Bibliography).

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the following: to Julie Meisami, my supervisor, who first introduced me to the delights of medieval Persian poetry and to the poetry of Farrukhī and Muʻizzī in particular; to Christine Kennedy, who undertook the exacting and time-consuming task of producing a machine-readable version of my text, and gave valuable advice and support at all times; and to Luke Treadwell, Chase Robinson and Celia Kerslake for their sympathetic interest and occasional very useful suggestions. I have enjoyed much help and kindness from Vicky Sayward and the staff of the Oriental Reading Room of the Bodleian Library, from Eira Spinetti at the Oriental Institute, and from many others. To all of them, and to my family, my heartfelt thanks.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

i) Journals and works of reference

BSOAS	*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CHIR	*The Cambridge History of Iran*
Dehkhuda	Dehkhudā, 'Alī Akba *Lughatnāma* 14 vols. Tehran 1325/1946, 1372/1993–4
EI^2	*Encyclopedia of Islam*, new edition
EIr	*Encyclopedia Iranica*
IC	*Islamic Culture*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*
IRAN	*Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

ii) Persian and Arabic texts

CM	Niẓāmi 'Arūḍī *Chahār Maqāla*
IA	Ibn al-Athīr *al-Kāmil*
QN	Kay Kā'ūs b.Iskandar *Qābūs-nāma*
SN	Niẓām al-Mulk *Siyāsat-nāma/Siyar al-mulūk*
TB	*Ṭārīkh-i Bayhaqī*
TS	*Ṭārīkh-i Sīstān*
ZD	Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī *Seljūk-nāma*

INTRODUCTION

> The King's Musicians are not only the most Skilful, either as to Singing and touching of Instruments, but are commonly the Ablest, and most ingenious Poets in the Kingdom; they sing their own Works, as it is related of Homer, and other Greek poets, who liv'd in his time; they are for the most Part in Praise of the King, and on several Actions of his Life, which they are ingenious enough in Flattery to extol, let them be never so worthy of Blame, and Oblivion.
>
> (Chardin, p. 10)

This elegantly phrased but cynical view of panegyric poetry, the comment of a Persian-speaking European in Iran during the declining years of the Safavid empire (1084–8/1673–7), though it contains an element of truth, is not how practitioners of the art of court poetry saw their own achievements. Two examples, separated by more than a thousand years but surprisingly similar in phraseology, will suffice. The Roman poet Horace, who addressed panegyrics to the Emperor Augustus and his minister Maecenas in the second half of the first century BC, claimed that with his poetry he had built a monument more lasting than bronze and grander than the Pyramids; it would outlast the ravages of weather and time and preserve his fame throughout the known world (Odes III, 30). Firdausī, not strictly a court poet, made a comparable claim in a passage of panegyric to Maḥmūd of Ghazna (vol. V, p. 238, ll. 64–65):

> Noble buildings are ruined by rain and by the heat of the sun.
> I have laid the foundations of a high palace of poetry which will not
> be damaged by wind and rain.

Bayhaqī, no admirer of the *Shāhnāma*, used the same metaphor. His purpose, he said, was to build 'a foundation for history [*tārīkh-paya*] on which to erect a great building which will last until the end of time' (TB p. 96). These three very different writers, a court poet, an epic poet who regarded himself as a historian, and a secretary turned historian, all spoke of their work in material terms, as buildings which would last forever, and, in the words of Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī, would 'give immortality to their patrons and the characters in their history' (CM p. 29). Panegyric poetry as practised by

Farrukhī and Mu'izzī was not history in Firdausī's sense, but it has a noteworthy historical component.

Close study of the poems of some medieval Persian panegyric poets can provide insights on details of military, political and social history, titulature, topics of current interest and contemporary attitudes thereto, and, more speculatively, indications of possible political undercurrents and intrigues. There is often much of interest on the biography and personality of the poet himself and of his patrons, and on the life of court poets in general. Such information has to be treated with caution. Considerations of etiquette and the established conventions of poetry make it unwise to accept as the literal truth everything the poet says about himself. The dependence of court poets for their livelihood on the continuing favour of princes and other members of the ruling classes, with the difficulties involved in trying to steer a course between rival factions, and the need for rapid adjustment to the sudden death or disgrace of a patron and his replacement by a successor who might well be his bitter enemy, was bound to colour their presentation of events, and could lead to the accusations of insincerity and 'economy with the truth' exemplified by Chardin's words. Nevertheless, it is hoped to demonstrate that panegyric poetry can be a useful addition to and amplification of other sources, especially for a period like that of the Great Seljuqs for which there is little surviving contemporary witness.

The poets whose works can be most profitably studied for historical purposes are those who wrote in celebration of specific events in the patron's public and private life, ranging from victorious campaigns and appointments to high office, to the birth of a son, recovery from illness, or the construction of a new palace. Public events were frequently commemorated in poems composed for major religious and secular festivals, especially 'Īd al-Fiṭr, Naurūz and the autumn festival of Mihragān, while poetry of a less serious nature, often illuminating on the relations between poet and patron, would be recited or sung at private parties. Celebratory poems are of special interest when the patron was the protagonist in a campaign that could be presented as a battle between Islam and the infidel (good and evil); a gifted poet at the patron's court could give weight, glamour, and, above all, publicity to such campaigns. The magnificent panegyrics of al-Mutanabbī on Sayf al-Daula's Byzantine wars and Farrukhī's *qaṣīda* on Maḥmūd's Somnath expedition in 417/1026 are examples of the poet's role in ensuring his patron's lasting fame.

Poems relating to less spectacular events may, however, be more significant from a historical point of view, because they may contain a sub-text not evident on a first reading. An instance of this is a *qaṣīda* (see Chapter 2) addressed to Maḥmūd by Farrukhī (p. 256) urging him not to accept overtures from two Chinese rulers. Wars against fellow-Muslims required explanation, and the arguments put forward by Farrukhī and Mu'izzī, respectively, in favour of such operations as Maḥmūd's seizure of Rayy in

420/1029, and Sanjar's campaigns against Ghazna in 510/1117 and his nephew Maḥmūd in 513/1119, are of interest as reflecting the official line on religious heterodoxy as justification for war. Unsuccessful or inglorious campaigns needed careful handling. Manūchihrī represents the near disaster that ended Mas'ūd's ill-judged foray in pursuit of Būrītigīn in winter 430/1038 as an example of noble forbearance towards an enemy beneath contempt (*Dīvān* pp. 30–33; Meisami 1990).

Farrukhī and Mu'izzī were primarily poets of great occasions, the panegyrists of two ethnically Turkish dynasties, the Ghaznavids and the Seljuqs, which successively ruled much of the Iranian world from the end of the tenth to the late twelfth century CE. The Ghaznavids were descended from a Turkish *ghulām* of the Sāmānids. They were brought up in the Perso–Islamic tradition of the Sāmānids, and despite their Turkish origin were culturally and *de facto* the natural successors of this Persian dynasty; they continued and extended its patronage of literature and scholarship until the death of the last effective Ghaznavid sultan, Bahrāmshāh, in *c.*552/1157. Maḥmūd, the first sultan (389–421/998–1030), his eldest son Muḥammad, and his much younger brother Yūsuf, were Farrukhī's chief patrons; Mas'ūd, his second son and ultimate successor, was also a patron. Farrukhī died comparatively young, and most of his poetry seems to have been written within the space of some 16 or 17 years (*c.*407–24–5/1016–1032–33), when the Ghaznavid empire was at its zenith. Mu'izzī, on the other hand, was long-lived (*c.*440–41 to *c.*519/*c.*1048–49 to *c.*1125–27) and was poetically active for over 50 years, as the chief poet (*amīr al-shu'arā*) of the third Seljuq sultan Malikshāh (465–85/1072–92), and his sons Berkyārūq and Sanjar. These rulers, while accepting the Perso–Islamic culture inherited from their predecessors, took pride, as the slave-descended Ghaznavids did not, and as Mu'izzī's poems make clear, in their Turkish identity and their descent from free nomadic tribesmen, whose leaders had exploited the underlying weaknesses of the Ghaznavids and gone on to build an empire which, by the end of Malikshāh's reign, extended from the Mediterranean to the Oxus. Malikshāh and Sanjar were Mu'izzī's most important patrons, but he had many others, including members of the royal family, most of the viziers of the day and other senior officials, in particular Niẓām al-Mulk and his sons Fakhr al-Mulk and Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. From a list of the events and topics mentioned in his *qaṣīdas*, the men to whom they were written and the occasions for which they were composed, it would be possible to construct a potted, though in more than one sense partial, history of his age. Like his fellow-Khurāsānī Niẓām al-Mulk, whose *Siyāsat-nāma* indirectly sheds a good deal of light on the politics and history of his time, Mu'izzī is valuable as a contemporary recorder of events.

A major reason for concentrating on the historical rather than the literary aspect of the poetry of Farrukhī and Mu'izzī is that both poets, like Farrukhī's older contemporary 'Unṣurī, Maḥmūd's *Amīr al-shu'arā*', did see

themselves as historians to some extent, in that they were describing and celebrating real events, of major importance; they say emphatically and repeatedly that what they record is true, they have seen history in the making, and the stories of Persian kings and heroes presented as history in such works as the *Shāhnāma* are stale fairytales compared with the thrilling events of their own time. 'The story of Alexander has become a legend and grown old; bring on a new discourse, for what is new is sweet' (Farrukhī, p. 67). 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī both present themselves as eye-witnesses of some of Maḥmūd's campaigns; 'Unṣurī saw the defeat of the Ilig Naṣr, the Qarakhānid ruler of Samarqand and Bukhārā, at Katar in 398/1008 (*Dīvān* pp. 120, 122), and Farrukhī accompanied Maḥmūd on two Indian campaigns before the Somnath expedition (pp. 67–76). The Ghaznavids were 'new men', the first of several dynasties descended from *ghulāms*, which from the early eleventh century onwards ruled parts of the eastern Islamic world. Like the Sāmānids whom they had displaced, they were devout Sunni Muslims and supporters of the 'Abbāsid caliphate; the Caliph's name was regularly mentioned in the *khuṭba* and on coinage, they regarded his endorsement as essential, and, at any rate at first, set a high value on the titles he bestowed. Maḥmūd, as the first king of a new dynasty [his father Sebuktigīn was technically an officer of the Sāmānids; the title on his tomb is *al-ḥājib al-ajall* (Bosworth 1960)], had something to prove, and he had a just appreciation of the propaganda value of appearing as the *Ghāzī*, the champion of Islam. Farrukhī's *qaṣīdas* on the Indian campaigns vividly describe the excitement and hardships of the journeys, the exotic and terrifying aspects of the lands traversed by the army, and the final triumph over the infidel. The courage, determination, faith in God and supreme generalship of the Sultan are given constant praise, while the reverses and losses are passed over or played down; it was not the court poet's business to draw attention to the darker side of a glorious victory.

Whether Seljuq sultans took their poets with them on campaign is not known. Mu'izzī wrote stirring and dramatic *qaṣīdas* on the victories of Malikshāh and Sanjar, but his poems lack the sense of personal experience that marks some of Farrukhī's Indian panegyrics. As Malikshāh's chief poet, Mu'izzī might have been expected to accompany the Sultan, but he never claims to have done so or to have witnessed the battles he describes; the rapidity with which Malikshāh could move suggests that he may have preferred, like his ancestors, to travel light, without the retinue that accompanied Ghaznavid sultans. The *Seljūk-nāma* records that in the space of one year (481/1090) he made his second visit to Syria, travelled to Antioch and Latakia and watered his horses in the Mediterranean, appointed governors for Aleppo, Antioch and Mosul, and returned to Iran; he then went to Samarqand, captured it and took the Khān prisoner, continued to Uzgend and left governors in every city as far as the borders of Khitā and Khutan (approximately the farthest extent of the Qarakhānid dominions), made a

visit to his governor in Khwārazm, and finally returned to Iṣfahān (ZD 31, 46–7). Even in modern terms this is a formidable amount of travelling.

Part of the standard hyperbole of court poetry was the claim that the monarch far outdid any king or hero of old in prowess in battle, greatness as a ruler, generosity and splendour. The heroes with whom Ghaznavid and Seljuq princes were routinely compared were the major figures of pre-Islamic Persian history and legend, the Kayānid and Sasanian kings, Alexander, and especially Rostam and his family, of whom Farrukhī has very little good to say, despite their Sīstānī origin and his own attachment to Sīstān, his birthplace. Although it seems surprising that Persian poets should be so dismissive of what was part of their heritage, there may be reasons for this. They had grown up in the traditions of the Sāmānids, who, though promoting the use of the Persian language and patronising Persian poets, still saw Arabic, the language of religion and the chancery, as the primary language of scholarship and culture. While Persian lyric poetry followed Arabic models in its use of monorhyme and Arabic metres, and contained much Arabic vocabulary, Firdausī looked to the *dihqān* culture of the pre-Islamic period; the characters in his epic were the Iranian heroes of the *dihqāns*. He used a Persian verse-form, the *maṣnavī*, and his language was almost entirely Persian, with very little Arabic vocabulary. His own words suggest that he did not seek Maḥmūd's patronage until he was approaching seventy; this would fit with 401/1010, the date when tradition says he presented the *Shāhnāma* to Maḥmūd. The Sultan, interested only in his own achievements, may have found these stories of ancient heroes, written in archaic language, old-fashioned and irrelevant. Bayhaqī, however, records being present once in Bust when Maḥmūd ordered a captured wild ass to be branded with his name before release, because his *qawwāls* told him that this was the practice of Bahrām Gūr (TB 505).

Despite the panegyrics to Maḥmūd, his brother Naṣr and his vizier Isfarā'īnī in the *Shāhnāma*, neither the poem nor its author were well-received at court, and its claims to be a work of history were generally rejected. Farrukhī, without naming Firdausī, says 'the *Shāhnāma* is a lie from end to end' (p. 346, l. 9); Mu'izzī does name him, and explicitly accuses him of lying in the *Shāhnāma*, especially about Rostam, who will call him to account at the Resurrection (p. 268, l. 6452). These lies are the tales of Rostam's seven labours, the *haft-khwān*, and the Sīmurgh's feather, examples of the fantastic and supernatural elements that made it impossible for contemporary poets and historians to regard Firdausī's epic as history. Bīrūnī's jibe in the *Kitāb al-saydāna* (p. 12), written in his extreme old age, about Persian being only fit for tales of kings and night-time storytelling, is probably directed against the *Shāhnāma*; it follows a complaint about the appointment of officials not well-versed in Arabic.

Bayhaqī, similarly, in his *khuṭba* on history (TB 666) pours scorn on the preference of ordinary people (*'amma*) for fairytales and fantasy. Like his

contemporary Gardīzī (p. 61), he emphasises the importance of truthful reporting and reliable sources, especially eye-witness:

> The eyes and ears are the observers and spies of the heart [*dil*], which convey to the heart what they see and hear … and the heart submits what it has received from them to the intellect [*khirad*], which is a just judge, to separate what is true from what is false and to uphold what is useful and reject what is not.

In other words, although 'sense-data' are the essential raw material of history, they must be sifted and their accuracy and intrinsic probability judged by a critical intelligence. Accordingly, Bayhaqī uses a number of well-placed informants, ranging from the vizier Aḥmad b.'Abd al-Samad and Abū Naṣr Mishkān, who was head of the *Dīvān-i rasā'il* in the reigns of Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd, Bayhaqī's chief and the principal source of his information on high-level meetings and diplomatic exchanges, to one of Muḥammad's court musicians and the woman who controlled Mas'ūd's harem (TB 531–33, 70–75, 396). His own eye-witness accounts of Mas'ūd's punitive expedition to Gurgān and Ṭabāristān in the spring of 426/1035 (TB 448–63), and the disastrous battle of Dandānqān in Ramaḍān 431/May 1040 (TB 620–30) are among the liveliest passages in his book. Farrukhī, in his Somnath *qaṣīda*, also comments on the human liking for stories of travel and adventure, the reasons for the popularity of the story of Alexander (the Alexander of romance), and contrasts his wanderings in search of the water of life with Maḥmūd's campaign against idolaters. The descriptions of the Thar desert and its poisonous snakes, the great cistern, the bloodshed and destruction in Somnath, the crossing of the tidal Indus and the arduous return journey are Farrukhī's own observations; the place-names he mentions have been used by Nāẓim (pp. 115–22) to elucidate the details of Maḥmūd's route.

While panegyric poems may throw light on past events, knowledge of the historical background derived from other sources, contemporary or based on reliable contemporary evidence, can clear up obscurities and difficulties in the poems, and make it possible sometimes to suggest approximate dates of composition, on the assumption that this may be fairly close to the events mentioned. Patrons were, however, sometimes praised for great deeds that had occurred many years earlier, poems referring to certain subjects might be held back for political reasons, and *marthīyas* were not always produced immediately after a death. The ambiguity of Farrukhī's references to the unnamed *valī-'ahd* in his *marthīya* on Maḥmūd suggests, as do several other poems, that he was hedging his bets on the succession to Maḥmūd (see Chapter 3).

The period of Farrukhī's lifetime is unusually rich in contemporary historians. 'Utbī's *Tārīkh al-Yamīnī*, translated from Arabic into Persian by Jurbādhqānī in 603/1206–7, takes the reign of Maḥmūd up to 411/1020.

Three Persian historians who wrote, or began their writing career, in the 440s/1050s, Gardīzī, the anonymous author of the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, and Bayhaqī, cover the period from Maḥmūd's accession to the death of Mas'ūd in 432/1041. Gardīzī's *Zayn al-akhbār* gives a straightforward, generally concise account of Maḥmūd's reign, valuable for the details of his campaigns, in some of which the author himself took part (pp. 61–62). The *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* is useful both for Maḥmūd's dealings with this province and for Farrukhī's background. Bayhaqī is essential reading for any study of Farrukhī, though the surviving part of his history, spanning the final months of Muḥammad's reign and nearly all of Mas'ūd's, postdates the time when Farrukhī's poetic output was at its peak. The frequent digressions of Bayhaqī's chronicle, and its references to events that occurred many years previously, partially compensate for the loss of most of his coverage of Maḥmūd's reign. By relating the fate of several of Farrukhī's major patrons – the deposition and imprisonment of Muḥammad, the execution of Ḥasanak, the consequences of Amīr Yūsuf's love for his treacherous *ghulām* Toghril, the death within weeks of the old enemies Maymandī and Ḥaṣīrī – he fills in the picture, adding an extra dimension of irony and sometimes pathos to the idealised portraits required by the conventions of court poetry.

Bayhaqī was a civil servant rather than a courtier, the deputy and trusted confidant of his loved and respected *ustād* Abū Naṣr Mishkān, himself the confidant of sultans and viziers. He provides valuable information on many of Farrukhī's patrons, some of whom were his colleagues and friends, and as well as making it possible to identify characters who would otherwise be unknown, he sheds new light on some of the major figures. Mas'ūd, seen from the civil servant's perspective, is capricious, lacking in judgment and forethought, indecisive but easily persuaded into taking actions afterwards regretted, too much devoted to hunting and wine-drinking, and increasingly unwilling to accept unpalatable advice. He comes across as a more interesting, complicated and in some respects tragic character than the larger than life warrior, hunter, elephant-rider and lion-slayer, lover of the essential kingly pursuits of *razm u bazm*, usually depicted by Farrukhī and Manūchihrī. The court poets present the public image of the prince; the secretary turned historian shows the man as he saw him. Both views are essential parts of the total picture.

Although the greater part of Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh* (there is some doubt about the exact title) is lost, substantial quotations from the '*Maqāmāt* of Abū Naṣr Mishkān' survive in the Timurid historian 'Uqaylī's *Athār al-wuzarā*' (pp. 153–92). Told in the first person by Abū Naṣr himself, they describe in detail the intrigues that led to the dismissal of Maymandī from the vizierate in 416/1025. 'Uqaylī states that the author (*musarrif*) of the *Maqāmāt* was Abū al-Faḍl Bayhaqī (p. 178), and it now seems to be generally accepted that the extracts quoted by 'Uqaylī are in fact from Bayhaqī's *Tārīkh*. Bayhaqī's practice of including long first-person narratives by informants he

considered reliable has already been indicated. He implies that he is using the actual words of his sources, presumably written down during extended conversations; ʻAbd al-Ghaffār, the authority for the story of Masʻūd's youth, provided Bayhaqī with a written text (TB 110). To what extent Bayhaqī remodelled his sources is not clear. He must have done so in the case of Bīrūnī's lost history of Khwārazm, which he acknowledges as his chief authority for the events leading to the fall of the Mā'mūnid dynasty in 408/1017 and the occupation of Khwārazm by Maḥmūd (TB 667 ff.). Although he quotes Bīrūnī at length as the first-person eye-witness of these events, it remains doubtful whether Bīrūnī in fact wrote like this; Bayhaqī admits that it is many years since he saw the book, which was written in Arabic, and what he has produced is very much in his own style.

There is useful material on the Ghaznavids in the *Majma' al-ansāb* of the Ilkhānid historian Shabānkāra'ī (d.759/1358), the only source for Sebuktigīn's *Pand-nāma*, or letter of advice to his son Maḥmūd, which, if genuine, is one of the earliest surviving Persian 'Mirrors for Princes' (pp. 70–73; Bosworth 1960). Shabānkāra'ī's account of the reigns of Maḥmūd, Muḥammad and Masʻūd is probably based, at least in part, on the lost books of Bayhaqī's history. Shabānkāra'ī's narrative of the deposition and imprisonment of Muḥammad in September 421/1030, although considerably shorter than Bayhaqī's version and different in tone, quotes a line from a favourite Arabic poem of Muḥammad, which surely must have come from the eye-witness report of the musician ʻAbd al-Rahmān cited by Bayhaqī (p. 75; TB 76). Where comparisons are possible, as in this case, Shabānkāra'ī is revealed as selective, abbreviating and simplifying his source. His style is simple and lively, possibly aimed at an audience that was not fluent in Persian. His work should, perhaps, be treated with caution, but he is valuable as being the only writer to describe in detail the process by which Muḥammad, apparently against his better judgment, was persuaded to claim the throne after his father's death (pp. 70–75). The relevant part of Bayhaqī is missing, and neither Gardīzī (pp. 92–93) nor Ibn al-Athīr (IA IX p. 282) suggest that Muḥammad was unwilling to accept the succession. Shabānkāra'ī is very perfunctory on the latter part of Masʻūd's reign, and the catastrophic battles with the Seljuqs that led to the Sultan's downfall and subsequent murder, though he does include Bayhaqī's story of the drug-induced sleep that lost Masʻūd the opportunity of capturing Toghril Beg (whom he confuses with Alp Arslān) (p. 81; TB 604). He may not have had access to the whole of Bayhaqī's history, and he gives the impression of having read it rather carelessly. According to Ibn Funduq in the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaq*, written *c.*555/1160, the work ran to over 30 volumes; he says he had seen some in the library of Sarakhs, others in the library of Mahd-i Irāq (in Nīshāpūr), but nowhere a complete set (p. 303). Much of it may have been lost at a fairly early stage, and the destruction of libraries by Ghurids and Mongols would have contributed further to its disappearance.

The sources for Mu'izzī's lifetime are much less satisfactory. As Cahen (p.60) remarks, commenting on the meagreness of the information available, 'the Great Seljuqs produced no historian during their lifetime'. The only contemporary writings of any note that have survived, all in Persian, are a mixture; each has some historical value, but none of them could be described as a history of the period. Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyāsat-nāma* (*Siyar al-Mulūk*), probably completed in 484/1091, a year before his murder, contains anecdotes of his life, but its chief value lies in the light shed on his views on government, especially in connection with current events, and indirectly on his relationship with Sultan Malikshāh. Ghazālī's *Faḍā'il al-anam*, a posthumous collection of letters addressed during the last ten years of his life to Sanjar, some of his ministers and officials, and other dignitaries, illustrates his relations with Sanjar and his concern for the welfare of his birthplace Ṭūs. The anonymous *Mujmal al-tawarikh*, completed in 520/1126, has a short section on the Seljuqs. Finally, the *Dīvān* of Mu'izzī himself, covering a period of more than 50 years from 465–6/1072–3, contains poems with some interesting historical components.

None of these writings can be considered as major sources for this period. The essential sources divide into two, reflecting the split that developed after Malikshāh's death between the western and eastern halves of the Seljuq empire: the one group mostly Arabic, by writers living in and chiefly interested in western Persia and Irāq, and the other Persian, whose principal representative was Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, who as a Khurāsānī was as much interested in the east as the west. The 'Arabic' group is based on a Persian text, the lost memoirs of Anūshirvān b.Khḥālid, treasurer and *'āriḍ al-jaysh* to Sultan Muḥammad b.Malikshāh, and subsequently vizier to his sons Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd. These memoirs were translated into Arabic, amplified and brought up to date by 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī in his *Nuṣrat al-fatra* (completed in 579/1183), which was used by Ibn al-Athīr. An abbreviated, simplified version was made by Bundārī in 623/1226. The only Persian work belonging to this group is the earliest, the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, a general history of the Muslim world by an anonymous author whose interest in and references to Ḥamadān and Asadābād suggest that he came from that area; for example, he remarks on the date of the name change in the *khuṭba* in Ḥamadān after the Caliph al-Mustaẓhir's death in 511/1118 (p. 413). There is no dedication nor indication of a possible patron. Among the writers he claims to have studied for the history of the early Persian kings, he includes Ibn al-Muqaffa', Hamza al-Iṣfahānī and Ṭabarī, but also lists authors of epic poetry, which he evidently regarded as a serious historical source. Unlike Farrukhī and his own contemporary Mu'izzī, he speaks of the *Shāhnāma* with great respect, appears to have known it well, and quotes 'Ḥakīm' Firdausī four times (pp. 3, 8, 31, 41); he also mentions the *Garshāsp-nāma* of Asadī of Ṭūs, the *Farāmurz-nāma* and other *maṣnavīs*, and the prose *Shāhnāma* of Abū'l-Mu'ayyid Balkhī (pp. 2, 3).

The *Mujmal* is not a major source for the Seljuqs; only 10 of the 500 or so pages of the book are devoted to them, and the coverage of individual reigns is necessarily brief. The topic that most concerned the author was the Ismā'īlī (Bātinī) threat. He mentions the murder of several notables by Bāṭinīs, and describes Sultan Muḥammad's campaigns against the Ismā'īlīs of Iṣfahān in more detail than is usual with him, making it clear that the capture of their stronghold Dizkūh and the execution of their leader 'Attāsh did not put an end to the problem. On the other hand, he is extremely perfunctory on the reign of Sanjar, and seems to have known little about eastern affairs. Cahen's important article mentions the *Mujmal* only very briefly, but it deserves attention because of its early date, the fact that it was written in Persian by a scholar who, unlike Bayhaqī and the court, admired and respected the tales of the ancient kings, and, more importantly, because it illustrates the difference of outlook and interests between the western and eastern halves of the Seljuq empire. The conflict with the Ismā'īlīs, which, according to the *Mujmal* and the *Seljūk-nāma*, was the major preoccupation of Muḥammad's reign, appears to have been of comparatively little interest to Sanjar, based in Marv and concerned primarily with his eastern frontiers, although he sent expeditions against the Ismā'īlī stronghold, Ṭabas, in 494/1101 and 497/1104, and lost more than one vizier to the knives of their assassins. This lack of interest is reflected in Mu'izzī's poetry: his royal panegyrics contain no explicit references to Bāṭinīs, in striking contrast to the gloating over the number of 'Qarmaṭīs' (the usual Ghaznavid name for Ismā'īlīs) killed by Maḥmūd, which is to be found in several of Farrukhī's poems (e.g. pp. 216, 223–24, 266). To Sanjar, the Ismā'īlīs were an occasional irritant; to Maḥmūd their presence in Multān and Rayy was a justification for attacking fellow-Muslims, in the interests of upholding religious orthodoxy.

The second group of sources is entirely Persian, and appears to be quite separate from the first. The fundamental text is the *Seljūk-nāma* of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, who was tutor to the Seljuq Sultan Arslān b.Toghril (556–71/1162–76), and may have acquired information in the royal court or in the archives. The text was preserved in Kāshānī's *Zubdat al-tawārīkh* and, in a rather better, and much better edited version, in Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jami' al-tawārīkh* (vol. 2, part 5). Its use was acknowledged by Rāvandī (a relative of the author) as the basis of his *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* of 601/1204–5; in this, the narrative is interrupted and amplified by commentary on events, in the shape of Qur'ānic verses, Arabic proverbs, anecdotes and many quotations, from Arabic and, much more frequently, Persian poetry. Firdausī is the author most quoted; this seems to point to a changed attitude to the *Shāhnāma* during the sixth/twelfth century, already noted in the *Mujmal* (Meisami 1994).

The *Seljūk-nāma*, written after 571/1176, is a straightforward but selective account of the Seljuq sultans and their reigns, in which attention is chiefly focused on dramatic and paradigmatic events and their consequences. For

example, in the reign of Alp Arslān (455–65/1063–72), only three events are described at length: the dismissal and execution of the vizier Kundurī at the instigation of Niẓām al-Mulk, the battle of Manzikert in 463/1071 and its aftermath, and the murder of Alp Arslān while he was campaigning in Transoxania. Malikshāh's reign also receives somewhat arbitrary treatment. Niẓām al-Mulk features almost as prominently in the story as the rather shadowy figure of his master, and the last part of Ẓahīr al-Dīn's narrative is taken up with the intrigues that led to the vizier's fall from favour and his murder by Ismā'īlī assassins, possibly with the complicity of his rival Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'īm. This recalled Niẓām al-Mulk's own part in the death of Kundurī and was seen as an omen of things to come. The sudden death of Malikshāh himself closes the narrative. To Ẓahīr al-Dīn history was exemplary, not a mere chronicle; in this, he follows Bayhaqī and, though there is no direct evidence that he was familiar with Bayhaqī's work, there is a resemblance between a passage in Bayhaqī (the comment of Ḥasanak's mother on his execution) and a passage in the *Seljūk-nāma* (Kundurī's comment on his own imminent death) that may be more than a coincidence (TB 189; ZD p. 3/31). The *Seljūk-nāma*, or its derivative *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, appears to have been the only work on Seljuq history available to later Persian historians; Rashīd al-Dīn incorporated it into *Jami' al-tawārīkh*, and Shabānkāra'ī seems to have used it for his brief account of the Seljuqs.

The historical work that is of the greatest importance for the Seljuq era, the backbone of any study of the period, and which also contains valuable information on the Ghaznavids, is Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fi al-tārīkh* (vols IX, X, XI). The coverage of events in the area of the Islamic world ranging from Syria to Transoxania is patchy but at times extensive, evidently depending on the availability of sources. Ibn al-Athīr very seldom names his sources; it would, for example, be interesting to know the origin of the long digression on the Qarakhānids (IA IX pp. 209–13), which Nāẓim (p. 47, n.3) condemns as being confused, but which the present writer has found useful. The consensus of opinion seems to be that Ibn al-Athīr did not know Persian, at any rate not well enough to be able to use Persian sources, but there is no positive evidence on this either way. His chief source for Ghaznavid history and the history of Khurāsān under the Seljuqs was Ibn Funduq's lost *Maṣhārib al-tajārib*, written in Arabic in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century (Cahen pp. 64–66). Some confirmation of this can perhaps be found in two items in the *Kāmil* that appear to have come from Bayhaqī's history, to which, as we have seen, Ibn Funduq had access. The first is the description of the flash flood that hit Ghazna in Rajab 422/July 1031, causing great damage, including the destruction of a bridge built by the Ṣaffārid 'Amr b.Layth (TB 260–62; IA IX p. 280). The second is an item in the obituary of Mas'ūd (IA IX p. 333); he is said to have given a poet 1000 dinars for one *qaṣīda*, and 1000 dirhams to another poet for every *bayt*. This sounds like a garbled version of the gifts to 'Unṣurī and Zaynabī

'Alavī at Mihragān 422/1031 recorded by Bayhaqī (TB 274). On the western half of the Seljuq empire, Ibn al-Athīr had access to the writings of 'Imād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī and Ibn al-Jauzī (Richards 1982, p. 87), and perhaps others now lost.

The historical aspect of the poetry of Farrukhī and Mu'izzī evokes comparisons between the Ghaznavid and Seljuq courts. The wider question of linguistic and cultural differences between the two dynasties will be considered later. As far as it is possible to judge it appears that the Seljuqs, with no tradition of formal rulership, took over the forms and ceremonies of Perso–Islamic kingship as practised by their Ghaznavid predecessors, just as they took over the Persian bureaucracy that had run the Ghaznavid empire. They also adopted the title 'Sultān'; the Ghaznavids had been the first major dynasty to make this the official title of the ruler, from the reign of Maḥmūd onwards. Although it does not appear on their coinage until the reign of Farrukhzād (445–51/1053–9) (Bosworth 1960), Bayhaqī uses it in the headings of official documents, while usually referring to Maḥmūd, Muḥammad and Mas'ūd as 'Amīr', as does Gardīzī. Farrukhī, who showers all the princes, including Maḥmūd's brother Yūsuf who was never in the line of succession, with such titles as *malik*, *shāhānshāh*, *pādshāh*, *shahriyār*, is very careful with 'Sultān', reserving it for Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd. In the courts of both dynasties the sultan was the source of power and authority, the sun around whom other luminaries revolved. He had his group of intimates, the *nadīms*, whose function was primarily social (Maḥmūd's *nadīm* and close friend Ḥaṣīrī, a major patron of Farrukhī, was an exception), and who were able to distance themselves from the constant intrigues and restless jockeying for position by officials trying to gain the sultan's ear and win his favour; Bayhaqī's history and *Athār al-wuzarā'* often feature such intrigues, and the plots against Niẓām al-Mulk bear witness to a similar situation in the Seljuq court.

One difference between the two courts appears to have been the degree of control exercised by the sultans over the day-to-day running of affairs. It is clear from both Bayhaqī and *Athār al-wuzarā'* that the Ghaznavid sultans, Maḥmūd in particular, kept a close watch on the workings of their administration and the activities of its principal functionaries. They had an extensive network of informers, whom they used even against members of their own family (TB 121–25). Maḥmūd was well-known to be extremely acute and suspicious (*zīrak ū dūrbīn*) (TB 137), and the description in *Athār al-wuzarā'* (p. 153 ff.) of Maymandī's downfall illustrates Maḥmūd's suspicious nature, his promotion of discord and jealousy among his courtiers and officials in order to prevent the formation of power blocs, and the atmosphere of intrigue and uncertainty thus created. Mas'ūd also made much use of informers (TB 217–18, 322), and Bayhaqī comments that he was an expert in such matters (TB 295–96); but after the manoeuvres of the first year of his reign, in which he disposed of most of the 'Maḥmūdīyān', stalwarts of his father's reign who had put Muḥammad on the throne, he took an increasingly

spasmodic interest in affairs of state, devoting much of his time to hunting and drinking. The contrast between him and his father is reflected in the works of their principal poets. ʿUnṣurī and Farrukhī celebrate great occasions and glorious victories, Manūchihrī celebrates the delights of the vintage, the charms of spring and the beauty of nature, and although he praises Masʿūd as a great warrior and king, references to specific achievements are rare.

The Seljuq sultans took less interest in intelligence and administrative detail. Alp Arslān, much to Niẓām al-Mulk's disapproval (SN p. 71), refused to employ informers and agents, on the grounds that they could be bribed to send in false reports and so make trouble. It seems that there was a division between the court and the Persian secretariat, the *dargāh* and the *dīvān*, which had not existed in the time of Maḥmūd and Masʿūd, when Abū Naṣr Mishkān, the head of the *Dīvān-i rasā'il*, was the trusted confidant of Maḥmūd (ʿUqaylī pp. 160, 188–89), and, to a lesser extent, of Masʿūd. This may have been, in part, a matter of language. The Seljuq sultans preserved their Turkish identity and speech, and while Malikshāh, growing up under the aegis of Niẓām al-Mulk, had Persian *nadīms* who included ʿUmar Khayyam and one of Muʿizzī's patrons, Sayyid al-Ruʾasā Abū'l-Maḥāsin, most of Sanjar's intimates were Turks, one of whom was even briefly appointed to the vizierate (516/1122–3). The Seljuq leaders who invaded Khurāsān from 426/1035 onwards appear to have had at least a working knowledge of Persian. Bayhaqī's account of the entry of Toghril Beg and his kinsman Ibrāhīm Ināl into Nīshāpūr in 429/1038 quotes an eye-witness, the *ṣāḥib-barīd* of Nīshāpūr (TB 550 ff.), and gives no indication that there was any difficulty in communicating with the notables of Nīshāpūr; nothing is said about interpreters.

The Seljuqs seemed, however, very exotic at first to their Persian subjects. The description of Alp Arslān that introduces the account of his reign in the *Seljūk-nāma* (ZD pp. 23/30) makes much of his terrifying appearance, great height and immensely long moustaches. At the same time, because of their ignorance of the practicalities of running an empire, the Seljuqs were much more dependent than the Ghaznavids on their Persian officials. Though Niẓām al-Mulk speaks of Alp Arslān in the *Siyāsat-nāma* with great respect and fear, and went to considerable lengths to avoid being suspected of heresy by him (SN pp. 96–97), he was able to manipulate the Sultan into dismissing and ultimately executing his rival, Toghril Beg's vizier Kundurī, and to establish an ascendancy over the Seljuq empire that lasted for nearly 30 years. Malikshāh's accession to the throne at the age of 18, his inexperience, and the immediate challenge from his uncle Qāvurd created a dependence on Niẓām al-Mulk, both as vizier and as father-figure, which Malikshāh did not completely throw off until the final year of his reign. Niẓām al-Mulk's position was unique, bridging the cultural and functional divide between *dīvān* and *dargāh*, between Persians and Turks; he was both the head of the Persian bureaucracy and Malikshāh's *atabeg*, acting as guardian to the

young prince. There is some doubt whether he officially held this purely Turkish title (Lambton 1988, p. 230); Mu'izzī, however, twice includes it in a list of his titles (pp. 235, 370), while the *Seljūk-nāma* records an occasion when Malikshāh addressed him as 'father' (*pidar*) (ZD pp. 31/46). No other vizier, Ghaznavid or Seljuq, ever held a position of such power.

Another notable difference between the Ghaznavid and Seljuq courts was the position of the ladies of the royal family. The wives, daughters and mothers of Ghaznavid sultans are nearly all anonymous, and are only mentioned briefly, usually on the occasion of a wedding or a death. The single exception is Maḥmūd's sister Ḥurra-i Khuttalī, evidently a woman of strong personality, intelligent and literate, who had much influence with her brother. She had been married to the last Mā'mūnid Khwārazmshāh, and later to the ruler of Khuttalān, but seems to have spent much of her time at Maḥmūd's court; according to *Athār al-wuzarā'* she was Maymandī's enemy and involved in the intrigues against him (p. 153). She was an ardent partisan of Mas'ūd in the succession struggle. Bayhaqī implies that she acted as an intelligencer on his behalf while he was governor of Herāt, and she wrote to him in Iṣfahān informing him of his father's death and urging an immediate return to Ghazna. In the last year of his reign, she, his mother and other female relatives sent him supplies to replace the baggage lost at Dandānqān, and later tried, unsuccessfully, to dissuade him from abandoning Ghazna for India (TB 13, 122, 639, 660).

The Seljuq royal ladies played a much more prominent role in public life, and seem to have enjoyed a considerable degree of political and financial independence. Most of those whose names have survived were Qarakhānid or Seljuq princesses; both dynasties were prolific, and there was much intermarriage between the various branches of the royal families. These princesses owned large estates and had their *kadkhudās* or viziers; some were well-known for their charitable works (Lambton 1988, pp. 35, 259, 269). The most famous and influential royal wife of this period was Malikshāh's chief wife Terken Khātūn, daughter of Tamghach Khān Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm, the Qarakhānid ruler of Samarqand and Bukhārā. Her determination to secure the succession for her son Maḥmūd brought her into conflict with Niẓām al-Mulk, who favoured Berkyārūq, the eldest son of Malikshāh by his first cousin Zubayda Khātūn. Malikshāh, in his late thirties increasingly resentful of Niẓām al-Mulk's domination, was urged by Terken Khātūn to replace him with her own vizier Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'īm; she failed, but the bitterness felt by Niẓām al-Mulk is reflected in a tirade against 'those who wear the veil', denouncing the evils of female intervention in affairs of state (SN ch. 42). Zubayda Khātūn too involved herself in political intrigue, and thereby brought about her own death; she was a party to the dismissal of Niẓām al-Mulk's son Mu'ayyid al-Mulk from the vizierate in Berkyārūq's reign, and in revenge Mu'ayyid al-Mulk had her strangled (IA X p. 195). A third wife of Malikshāh, Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, the mother of Sultans

Muḥammad and Sanjar, was, unusually for a woman, the *mamdūḥ* of a number of poems by Mu'izzī; these, and what is known of her life, are discussed in Chapter 7.

Awareness of the historical context can enhance the appreciation of Farrukhī's and Mu'izzī's poems as art; and much panegyric poetry makes better sense if the events to which it refers can be identified and dated. To dismiss panegyric poetry as a possible historical source is to lose something potentially valuable, as several previous writers have demonstrated. Nazim's use of Farrukhī's Somnath *qaṣīda* has already been mentioned, and he quotes Farrukhī as a source for details of other Indian campaigns. Gulam Mustafa Khān made notable additions to the existing information on Bahrāmshāh (512–52/1118–57), by studying the panegyrics of contemporary poets (IC 1949). Iqbāl (1959), the editor of the first, and most useful, printed text of Mu'izzī's *Dīvān*, quotes copiously from Mu'izzī and other poets, both Persian and Arabic, when writing on the Seljuq vizierate. Meisami (1990) has pointed out the possible political implications of certain poems of 'Unṣurī, Farrukhī and Manūchihrī; Imāmī (1994) claims Farrukhī as an important source, on a par with Bīrūnī and Gardīzī, regarding India, Maḥmūd's relations with the Qarakhānid khāns, and conditions in Sīstān under Ghaznavid rule (pp. 39–40).

Much more has been written about Farrukhī's life and poetry than Mu'izzī's. Farrukhī is a poet of great charm, famous for his easy and graceful style and light touch; his chief patron was one of the most celebrated Islamic warrior kings; and much is known about the history of his time. Mu'izzī, on the other hand, has been neglected by modern scholarship, both in Iran and the west, for reasons which are not entirely clear; Iqbāl appears to be the only scholar to have made an extended survey of his life and poetry, and to have used his *dīvān* as a major historical source. His poetry is not as immediately attractive as Farrukhī's, lacking something of its lyricism, freshness and delight in natural beauty, but Mu'izzī is a very skilful and versatile craftsman, ingenious and inventive in his use of words and rhyme, and capable on occasion, especially in *marthīyas*, of expressing deep feeling in simple and dignified language. It is regrettable that he is not better known, both as a poet and as a source of historical information.

Panegyric poetry is not much to modern taste, either in Iran or among western scholars, and poets like 'Unṣurī and Mu'izzī, greatly admired and regarded as models by contemporary and later writers, have less appeal for modern readers. The present writer, in Iṣfahān some years ago, was able to buy a copy of the latest edition of Manūchihrī's *dīvān* (1375/1996), but Farrukhī and Mu'izzī seemed to be unknown and their *dīvāns* long out of print, though Firdausī, Sa'di and Ḥāfiẓ and some other medieval writers were well represented in the bookshops. There is also, perhaps, less interest currently in Mu'izzī's patrons, the Great Seljuqs, than in their predecessors the Sāmānids and Ghaznavids, and their successors the Ilkhānids and

Timurids. With this difference in mind, and because of the disparity in length between the two *dīvāns* (Farrukhī's contains some 9,000 *bayts*, Mu'izzī's over 18,000), the time-span of the two poets' poetic careers, and the number of their respective patrons, more space has been devoted to Mu'izzī than to Farrukhī. It is hoped that the present study may perhaps contribute to an increase of interest in Mu'izzī's work.

1

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE PERIOD

The Turkish element

Turks and Turkishness are, on the whole, a minor topic in the poetry of Farrukhī and Mu'izzī, except in the context of erotic *nasībs*, on which more will be said later. But the Turkish element in the society of their day, and, in particular, the relations between Turks and Persians, especially in the court circles in which the poets spent their lives, were of such importance that it has seemed appropriate to devote a chapter to this intriguing but rather neglected subject, as a prelude to the main body of the present study. The evidence for social relationships is admittedly scanty, mostly based on brief episodes or comments made in passing by various writers, and nearly always referring to contacts in the higher levels of society. With this in mind, four major Persian writers, all from Khurāsān, and all more or less contemporary with either Farrukhī or Mu'izzī, have been picked out because their reaction to Turks represents a fairly wide, but probably characteristic, spectrum of views. On the Turkish side, the *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk* of Maḥmūd Kāshgharī will be studied in some detail, as it provides a unique and fascinating insight into how educated Turks from the eastern Qarakhānid khānates of Kāshghar and Bālāsaghūn saw themselves and their Arab and Persian fellow-Muslims.

The attitude to Turks of these Persian writers must have been governed by the degree and type of contact they had with Turks, and the extent to which their lives were affected by the Turkish presence. They approach the subject from different angles and are very different in position, temperament and personality. Firdausī was an obvious choice, both because of his enormous importance in Persian literature and history, and because he is the earliest major Persian poet whose work has survived. If, as seems likely, he spent much of his life in Ṭūs, his birthplace, he probably had little day-to-day contact with Turks, and has not much to say about them in general in the *Shāhnāma*, apart from an occasional disparaging comment. However, his apparent dislike and distrust of Turks, and his concept of Iran and Tūrān as two irreconcilable and mutually hostile elements ('fire and water', as he says on several occasions), was the mainspring of many of the most famous episodes in the *Shāhnāma*, which arise from the constant warfare between the

legendary figures of the Persian king Kay Kāvūs, aided by the Sīstānī hero Rostam, and the Turkic ruler Afrāsīyāb, and was probably related to the events of Firdausī's own lifetime. Some ten years before the completion of the *Shāhnāma* in 401/1010, the Sāmānid empire had collapsed, and its lands in Transoxania, including the great cities of Bukhārā and Samarqand, were taken over by the Turkish Qarakhānids; in the years that followed, the Ilig Naṣr made determined efforts to extend their realm beyond the Oxus, until Maḥmūd's victory at Katar in 399/1008 put a final end to his ambitions. As Kowalski (*passim*) points out, Firdausī identified the 'Turks' of the period of the heroic and semi-mythical Kayānid kings with contemporary Turks, and their king Afrāsīyāb, the formidable, implacable and treacherous enemy of Kāvūs and Rostam, the murderer of Siyāvash, could have been seen as a forerunner of the Ilig Naṣr, though none of Firdausī's panegyrics to Maḥmūd draw such parallels.

Nāṣir-i Khusrau, in some ways the most remarkable member of this quartet of writers, and certainly the most extreme in his views on Turks, was a professional secretary (*dabīr*) who worked for the Seljuq administration in Marv as a financial official (*mutasarrif*). In 437/1045–46 he gave up his job, abandoned worldly life and set out on a seven-year journey, recorded in his famous *Ṣafarnāma*, in the course of which he made the pilgrimage to Mecca four times and spent three years in Cairo, the capital city of the Fātimid caliph al-Mustanṣir. He had been converted to Ismailism, and on his return to Khurāsān in 444/1052–53 he began to work as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*. The persecution he suffered forced him into permanent exile in a remote corner of Badakhshān, where he died some 20-odd years later, and resentment and homesickness for Khurāsān evidently fuelled the almost pathological loathing and contempt for Turks and their sycophants, which is freely expressed in his poems.

> The Turks were once my slaves and servants; why should I enslave my body to the Turks?
>
> (*Dīvān* p. 305, l. 4)

> It is obscene [*zisht*] for a free man to be the slave of Tūghan, the domestic of Ināl.
>
> (p. 253, l. 5)

> Although Tigīn and Īlak and Pīghū have today taken the reins of creation, do not despair of the mercy of God.
>
> (p. 380, l. 4)

> Ghuzz and Qipchāq are plants full of disaster, which grow on the banks of the Oxus.
>
> (p. 329, l. 11)

He reproaches his native Khurāsān for its subservience to the Turks:

> Khurāsānīs … run like slaves, both rich and poor, before Ināl and Tigīn.
> They are like 'Ad and the Turks are like the violent wind; through that wind they became a sandy desert.
> (p. 192, ll. 3–5)

In other passages he pours scorn on the warlike Turks for having gone soft, and on people who curry favour with them:

> The Turks used to be warriors in Khurāsān; they have become weak and contemptible like harem women.
> Nowadays the sons of free men are not ashamed to bend their backs to the Turks in greed.
> (p. 461, ll. 11–12)

> O you who boast that, as you say – I am among the men at the sultan's court;
> Today Tigīn calls me, and Ināl has promised me a gift tomorrow.
> (p. 302, ll. 13–14)

In a poem of warning against worldly vanities, addressed to the people of Khurāsān, he looks back, in a fine *ubi sunt* passage, to the glorious days of Maḥmūd of Ghazna's rule in Khurāsān, and its inevitable end:

> Why do you take pride in the rule of the Turks? Remember the majesty and glory of Maḥmūd of Zābulistān.
> Where is he to whom the terrified Farīghūnids abandoned Gūzganān?
> When he laid India waste with the hooves of his Turkish horse, and trampled the land of Khuttalān with the feet of his elephants …
> He was beguiled by the world, but there are many like him who are beguiled by this world.
> (p. 8, ll. 16–18; p. 9, l. 2)

It seems doubtful, however, whether the people of Khurāsān shared Nāṣir-i Khusrau's hatred of the Seljuq conquerors and his nostalgia for the lost empire of Maḥmūd. The Ghaznavids had brutally exploited the rich province, and the discreet welcome given to Toghril Beg when he first took Nīshāpūr in 429/1038 may imply a willingness to accept the change of masters; other literary evidence suggests that though the Turks may not have been loved, feelings as violent as those of Nāṣir-i Khusrau were not at all common.

The remaining two writers, Bayhaqī and Niẓām al-Mulk, were 'men of the pen', the highly educated Persian secretaries, bilingual and widely read in Arabic (in modern terms the 'mandarins'), who ran the civil administration of the realm. Bayhaqī, while privy to the innermost secrets of the Ghaznavid state, was a fascinated observer of events, but very rarely an active participant in them; he was in the position of a modern civil servant, ideally placed for watching the workings of government without having executive responsibilities of his own. Niẓām al-Mulk, on the other hand, as vizier for nearly 30 years to the second and third Seljuq sultans, Alp Arslān (455–65/1063–72) and Malikshāh (465–85/1072–92), was, until he fell out with Malikshāh towards the end of his life, the most powerful man in the Seljuq empire after the Sultan, and sometimes, especially during the early years of Malikshāh's reign, appeared to be more powerful than the Sultan.

Bayhaqī's position brought him into contact on a daily basis with Turks, and he related to them as individuals. Most of the Turks he mentions were senior military figures, and he thought highly of some of them. 'Alī b.Il-Arslān al-Qarīb, or 'Alī Khwīshāvand, a nickname that indicates some relationship with the Sultan's family, was the chief *ḥājib* (the senior general) under Maḥmūd, and after Maḥmūd's death he took the initiative in putting Muḥammad on the throne. He abandoned Muḥammad when it became clear that his cause was lost, but was unable to save himself and his brother Mangitarak from Mas'ūd's vengeance. Bayhaqī records the dignified words in which he bade farewell to Abū Naṣr Mishkān, in anticipation of his arrest and imprisonment; Bayhaqī's comment is that such men are rare (TB 535). Another Turk whom Bayhaqī regarded with great respect was the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh, whose foresight and prudence saved him from a clumsy plot by Mas'ūd to have him assassinated (TB 316 ff.), while another Altuntāsh, much respected for his courage, honesty and directness, who had known Mas'ūd for many years, attempted without success to dissuade him from going to Marv in the summer of 431/1040 for the campaign that ended in the disaster of Dandānqān (TB 615).

In general, however, the Turkish commanders are presented as touchy, quarrelsome and unwilling to accept responsibility or suggest plans of action, on the grounds that they are 'men of the sword, slaves bought for silver' [*khudāvandān-i shamshīr … ki bandigān-i diram kharīdigān bāshīm*] ('Uqaylī, p. 162). They were the absolute property of the sultan, body and soul, owing him total and blind obedience, and it was not for them to speak about policy. This did not save them from being blamed when things went wrong; three generals are said to have been executed after Dandānqān. They were in a no-win situation, illustrated by a passage in *Āthār al-wuzarā'* that describes the intrigue which led to the dismissal and imprisonment of the vizier Maymandī in 416/1025. In this passage, Abū Naṣr Mishkān quotes a letter written to him by Arslān Jādhib, one of Maḥmūd's most senior and most capable generals, expressing great anxiety over the campaign against

Maymandī and the reasons for it, and the fear that he would be replaced by an incompetent. He wanted to help Maymandī, for whom he had great respect, but without incurring the suspicion and distrust of Maḥmūd; as a Turk and a man of the sword, he was not expected to get involved in the affairs of viziers, and Maḥmūd preferred his servants to be at variance with each other (ʻUqaylī, pp. 154–55). The letter is interesting for the light it throws on the strict division that was expected to be observed between the functions of the Turkish military and the Persian bureaucracy, and it also seems to show how this barrier could occasionally be crossed by fellow-feeling, and perhaps even friendship, between a Turkish general and a senior Persian *dabīr*. Incidentally, it would appear from this correspondence that Arslān Jādhib (who died in 419/1028 and whose mausoleum is still to be seen at Sangbast in Khurāsān) was, perhaps unusually, literate, unlike his compatriot Begtoghdī, Masʻūd's *sālār-i ghulāmān* (TB 292).

For all their acknowledged military skills and virtues of honesty, toughness and directness, the Turkish soldiers who commanded, and to a considerable extent manned, the Ghaznavid army were seen by Persians as simple souls, not lacking in intelligence but deficient in education and subtlety. Bayhaqī attributes the downfall of two generals, Aryārūq and Asightigīn Ghāzī, who fell foul of Masʻūd early in his reign, to their ignorance of secretarial practice, their lack of sophistication, and their poor judgment of men.

> They had no one to manage their affairs, nor did they have two suitable *kadkhudās*, professional *dabīrs* who were experienced in the ups and downs of life. What could be expected of the likes of Saʻīd Sarrāf [Ghāzī's *kadkhudā*], obscure and incompetent servants? Turks are always surrounded by such people, and do not consider the consequences, so inevitably get into difficulties, because they lack experience. Although they are capable and generous and have much wealth, they cannot manage *dabīrī* and do not know today from tomorrow.
>
> (TB 282)

The other Turks whom Bayhaqī mentions, and who are the central figures of some of his liveliest stories, were the young *ghulāms* whose beauty, boldness and quick-wittedness brought them success. One of the most notable of these was Nushtigīn Naubatī, the favourite successively of Maḥmūd, Muḥammad and Masʻūd, who made him governor of Gūzganān (TB 410) (a post that had once been held by Muḥammad), the commander of an army, and, in 431/1040, the military governor (*shaḥna*) of Bust (TB 643). As governor of Gūzganān, he distinguished himself by capturing a notorious brigand, one ʻAlī Quhandizī, but the real hero of this exploit, for which Nushtigīn claimed the credit, was, in Bayhaqī's opinion, another *ghulām*, Baytigīn, who tricked the brigand into surrender. Baytigīn had belonged to Abū Naṣr Mishkān,

and at the time of writing was in the service of the Ghaznavid sultan Ibrāhīm (451/1060); Bayhaqī says he was clever, brave and capable, a good horseman, an expert archer and spearman, and a crack polo-player (TB 561–62). These *ghulāms* were proverbial for their beauty; in late childhood and early adolescence they served as pages and cupbearers at royal courts and in the palaces of great men, and later as soldiers. Their dazzling appearance on ceremonial occasions or at private parties, dressed in their finest clothes, is described by Bayhaqī (TB 289), and confirmed by the frescoes that have survived from Mas'ūd's palace of Lashkarī Bāzār (Schlumberger pp.61–65, 101–8, plates 121, 122, 123, 124; Sourdel-Thomine pp. 29–36). They had many admirers, and the word 'Turk' became a synonym for 'beloved' in Persian lyric poetry, especially in the erotic *nasībs* of *qaṣīdas*, from Rūdakī to Ḥāfiẓ. The beloved of these *nasībs* is clearly male; Farrukhī, for example, in one of his earliest poems to Maḥmūd (*Dīvān* p. 104) contrasts the dual role of the 'Turk' as musician and charmer in time of peace and warrior in time of war. Maḥmūd's famous love for Ayāz and various stories in Bayhaqī's history about trouble caused by a quarrel over a boy suggest that such passions were a regular feature of court life. The Turk/beloved, variously called 'idol' (*but, nigār*, *ṣanam*) or 'doll' (*lu'bat*), was characterised by a standard set of personal attractions: he was tall, straight, and slim, like a cypress, dark-eyed and dark-haired, with scented black lovelocks, silver-skinned and rosy-complexioned, phraseology, which became routine in the description of a young man's physical beauty. Bayhaqī, for example, writing of the former vizier Ḥasanak, stripped for execution, says 'he had a body as white as silver and a face like a myriad idols [*tanī chūn sīm safīd u ruyī chū ṣad hazār nigār*]' (TB 187).

Melikian-Chirvani, in a section on Buddhist themes in Persian poetry, has argued that these descriptions, which in the romances are applied to women as well as men, together with frequent references to the moonlike face of the beloved, and to gardens adorned like idol-temples (*but-khāneh*, or *bahār*, which, with its two meanings of 'spring' and *vihāra* [Buddhist sanctuary], gives much scope for wordplay) are all relics of Buddhism, of which many archaeological traces have survived in eastern Iran, and, until recently, in Afghanistan. The word *but* itself, the favourite word for 'idol', is a corruption of *buddha*; the Buddha's face is round like the full moon, and statues and statuettes (*lu'bat*) of the Buddha were often made of silver. The argument is persuasive; it is not known whether the poets who used these images were aware of their origin.

As an example of the career of one of these professional beauties, Bayhaqī relates the sad story of Toghril, the favourite of Maḥmūd's brother Yūsuf. Toghril, who, in Bayhaqī's words, was much like a thousand other *ghulāms* in appearance and attractions, had been sent from Turkestan as a gift to Maḥmūd by the wife of Arslān Khān, whose practice it was to send him every year two outstandingly beautiful slaves, a boy and a girl, in return for

whom he sent her fine textiles and pearls. Maḥmūd liked Toghril, and made him one of his seven or eight cupbearers, second only to Ayāz. Two years later, Maḥmūd held a *majlis* at which Yūsuf was present, with Toghril and the other cupbearers in attendance, dressed in red or blue. As soon as Yūsuf saw Toghril he fell in love with him, and could not take his eyes off the boy. Maḥmūd noticed this and at first said nothing; he then rebuked Yūsuf for making eyes at his *ghulāms*, as a breach of decorum and good manners, but finally gave Toghril to him. Yūsuf became deeply devoted to Toghril, gave him many rich gifts and made him his *ḥājib*. Later, he found Toghril a wife of good family and held a magnificent wedding ceremony for him, on a scale that aroused some disapproval; Farrukhī wrote a poem to celebrate the occasion (*Dīvān* p.133). But the story had an unhappy ending. After Maḥmūd's death, Yūsuf incurred Mas'ūd's hostility because of his support for Muḥammad. Toghril was promised preferment if he would act as a spy on his master and report on everything he said and did ('count his every breath'). He got little profit from his treachery; he was universally reviled for it and died young and disappointed. As Bayhaqī commented, 'this foolish Turk [*īn turk-i ablah*] swallowed the bait and did not know that ingratitude brings misfortune' (TB 250, 252–53).

Niẓām al-Mulk, writing the *Siyāsat-nāma* in the later years of his career for a master who, unlike the half-Iranian Maḥmūd of Ghazna, was unequivocally Turkish on both sides, descended from two ruling houses (Malikshāh's mother was probably a daughter of Qādir Khān Yūsuf of Kāshghar), and able to trace his line back to Afrāsīyāb (SN p.10), was more concerned with the characteristics of Turks as rulers than as individuals. He felt great respect for, and fear of, Alp Arslān, who, as a fervent Hanafī, did not like his vizier's attachment to the Shāfi'ī rite, and according to his own account he spent 30,000 dinars to prevent a story that suggested he was a Rāfidi (an extreme Shi'i) from reaching Alp Arslān's ears (SN 967). He had a very high regard for Maḥmūd of Ghazna, and several times quotes his example as one to be followed; he also thought well of Maḥmūd's forebears Sebuktigīn and Alptigīn, and ascribes the downfall of the Sāmānids to their hostility to Alptigīn and their failure to appreciate the value of a good servant, a possible hint to Malikshāh, though couched as a piece of general advice (SN 96–97). Although he is most careful to avoid any appearance of overt criticism, his chief quarrel with his Turkish masters seems to have been their failure to follow respected precedents, and to observe what he considered to be the proper distinctions between the positions and functions of individuals. Alp Arslān discontinued the use of intelligence agents (*ṣāḥib-i khabarān*), often mentioned by Bayhaqī as a Ghaznavid practice, on the grounds that his enemies would bribe them to send false reports and make trouble; Niẓām al-Mulk, however, considered that intelligence-gathering was a necessary activity of government (SN 71).

In the second half of his book (chapter 40 onwards), evidently written after his fall from favour, he complains bitterly and almost in a tone of hysteria that the civil administration is in total disorder, and the king is too much preoccupied with war and campaigning to have time to set matters to rights. A symptom of this is the indiscriminate conferring of titles, regardless of the functions or abilities of the recipients.

> When the title of an *imām* or an *ʿālim* or a *qāḍī* is Muʿin al-Dīn, and the same title is given to a Turkish servant or a Turkish *kadkhudā* who knows nothing at all about religious science or the Shari'a and may not even be able to read and write, then what difference is there in rank between learned and ignorant, between *qāḍīs* and Turkish servants [*shāgirdān-i turkī*]?
>
> (SN 148)

He also claims that titles of Turkish *amīrs* (i.e. military men) have always been compounded with *al-Daula* and those of *khwājas* (senior officials) with *al-Mulk*. A glance at the long list of Muʿizzī's *mamdūḥs*, many of whom had at least two titles, to some extent confirms the apparently random distribution of such honorifics. For example, the Turkish general Savtigīn had the title of *ʿImād al-Daula* appropriate to his profession, but also that of *Quṭb al-Dīn*, while Abū Muḥammad Mānī'i b.Masʿūd, *rā'īs* of Khurāsān and a member of a famous and wealthy family of religious scholars in Nīshāpūr, had a title from all three groups – *Tāj al-Dīn*, *Majd al-Daula* and *Naṣīr al-Mulk* (*Dīvān* pp. 19, 27, 651).

A further complaint is that no attention is paid to the religious beliefs of court and ministerial employees; professional Khurāsānī secretaries, orthodox in religion, are being replaced by all and sundry, including Jews, Christians and Magians. One day, the Turks will realise their mistake; this was not the practice under the Ghaznavids and Toghril and Alp Arslān, who saw Khurāsānī administrative expertise as essential for the successful running of their empires. As well as being an implicit criticism of Malikshāh, this passage could also be taken as a dig at Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im, Niẓām al-Mulk's rival, who was not a Khurāsānī but a Shīrāzī. Niẓām al-Mulk's violent disapproval of the influence of women in public affairs has already been mentioned. These strictures could be attributed to the natural conservatism of a man in his seventies, a strong believer in tradition who had been the dominant figure in government for nearly 30 years; but the claim that Malikshāh commanded him and several others to write a treatise on government and what was not being done well suggests that the Sultan himself was uneasy about the state of affairs. The chief weakness of the Seljuq state, which emerged after the premature death of Malikshāh, was the tribal notion that rule should not be vested in one person, but should be shared among the members of the ruling family. This was to lead to the

fragmentation of the western half of the Seljuq empire; strong rule and longevity enabled Sanjar to hold the eastern half together for some 40 years.

The Turkish view of Persians and of themselves has survived in the work of a most unusual Turk, as learned in Arabic as in his native tongue, and with a good knowledge of Persian. This was Maḥmūd b.al-Ḥusayn b.Muḥammad al-Kāshgharī, from Barskhān on the southern shores of Lake Issyk Kul (the birthplace of Maḥmūd of Ghazna's father Sebuktigīn). He came from a noble family, probably related to the Qarakhānid khāns, and may have arrived in Iraq in the train of the Qarakhānid princess Terken Khātūn when she travelled to marry Malikshāh. Kāshgharī wrote the *Dīwān lughāt al-Turk* in Baghdād between the years 464–9/1072–7, and dedicated it to the Caliph al-Muqtaḍī (467–87/1075–94). His purpose in writing the *Dīwān*, an analytical dictionary of the Turkish language, illustrated by much incidental lore and many quotations from poetry, was to encourage an already existing interest in Turkish among Arabic scholars, and to promote a better knowledge of the language, for both religious and practical reasons. The Seljuqs under Toghril Beg had driven the last of the Būyids from Baghdād in 447/1055, and the 'protecting power' was no longer a Turkish *Amīr al-umarā*' or a Shi'i Iranian ruler, but a very powerful Sunni Muslim Turkish dynasty, and it was in everyone's interests that Turks and Arabs should have a closer understanding of each other. At the beginning of the *Dīwān*, he gives his credentials: he is much-travelled in Turkish lands and learned in their languages, eloquent, highly educated, but also expert in throwing the lance (that is, a real Turk, a soldier as well as a scholar). The title of his book (translated as 'A Compendium of the Turkic Dialects') and its contents, and the passage quoted above, show that he was well aware of the existence of several other Turkish dialects besides the 'Khāqānī', the Turkish spoken in Kāshghar, with which he was most familiar (EI,[1] 'al-Kāshgharī'; Dankoff I, 3–4).

He gives the reasons for learning Turkish in plain language.

> When I saw that God most high had caused the Sun of Fortune to rise in the Zodiac of the Turks and set their Kingdom among the spheres of Heaven; that He called them Turk, and gave them Rule; making them kings of the Age, and placing in their hands the reins of temporal authority; appointing them over all mankind, and directing them to the Right … every man of reason must attach himself to them, or else expose himself to their falling arrows. And there is no better way to approach them than by speaking their own tongue, thereby bending their ear, and inclining their heart.
>
> (I. p.70)

In another passage, he cites a *ḥadīth*, said to go back to the time of the Prophet, to a similar effect: 'Learn the tongue of the Turks, for their reign

will be long'. Later, he quotes another *ḥadīth*: 'I [i.e. God] have a host whom I have called *at-Turk* and whom I have set in the East; when I am wrath with any people I will make them sovereign above them'. This is immediately followed by a panegyric on the Turks:

> This is an excellence of theirs above the rest of created beings: that He the Most High took it upon Himself to name them; that He settled them in the most exalted spot and in the finest air on earth; that He called them His own army. Not to mention their other virtues, such as beauty, elegance, refinement, politeness, reverence, respect for elders, modesty, dignity and courage, all of which serve to justify their praises unnumbered.
>
> (I. p. 274)

Kāshgharī twice speaks of Turkish and Arabic as being on a par with each other like well-matched racehorses:

> There is an excellence in this language [i.e. Turkish] that it keeps pace with Arabic like two horses in a race, since the Arabs form verbs from nouns; the Turks also do this.
>
> (I. p.71, II. p.326)

Whether or not this last point is true, the implication, as Dankoff says, is that the two languages are equal in richness and complexity (I. p. 4l). It is clear from Kāshgharī's text that he knew Persian well, but he seems to have had a fairly low opinion of it, perhaps partly because of its comparatively simple Indo-European structure and syntax; there seems to be an element of linguistic snobbery in this, though it should be borne in mind that he was addressing an Arab or Arabic-speaking audience. More seriously, he considered that the introduction of Persian words had a harmful effect on pure Turkish. To illustrate his point, Kāshgharī claims that when the Oghuz (the tribal group from which the Seljuqs came) mixed with Persians they forgot many Turkic words and used Persian instead (I. p. 115). The most elegant of the (Turkic) dialects, he says, belongs to those who know only one language, who do not mix with Persians, and who do not customarily settle in other lands (i.e. settled Turkish populations). The most elegant is that of the Khāqānī kings (the *khāns* of Kāshghar and Bālāsaghūn) and those who associate with them (I. pp. 83–84). He adds that the people of Bālāsaghūn speak both Soghdian and Turkic (the site identified today as Bālāsaghūn, visited by the present writer in 1996 and 1999, contains the remains of a considerable Soghdian city). The same is true of the people of Tarāz (Talās) and Isfījāb.

Kāshgharī insists that Persians borrow words from Turkish rather than the other way round. Transoxania must be part of the Turkish lands because its

cities have Turkic names: Samarqand is *Samiz kand* ('fat city') because of its size, Shāsh (modern Tashkent) is *tas kand* ('city of stone'), Uzgend is *oz kand* ('city of our souls') (I. pp. 83–84). Modern scholarship, however, regards *kand* or *kent*, so frequent in place-names, as a Soghdian, not a Turkic, word (Clausen p. 728; Erem p. 231). Kāshgharī's anti-Persian sentiments seem to have extended to Persians as a race as well as to their language, and were evidently shared by others; he quotes a proverb 'when a Turk assumes the morals of a Persian his flesh begins to stink', which he says was coined to advise people to live among their own kind (II. p.103). His prejudice against the Persian language was not merely chauvinistic. Other earlier or contemporary Arabic scholars found it difficult to take Persian seriously as a language of government or as a vehicle of scholarship, because of what they saw as its lack of precision and of scientific vocabulary. This point of view was expressed most forcefully by Bīrūnī in an extract from the *Kitāb al-saydāna*:

> If one looks at a scientific book which has been translated into Persian, its beauty has gone, its importance is eclipsed, its face is blackened, and it loses all usefulness, because this language is no use except for tales of kings and night-time story-telling.
>
> (Bīrūnī 1973 p.12)

In spite of Kāshgharī's strictures, the court culture of the Qarakhānids was almost entirely Persian, not Turkish, and the Turkish poetry quoted by Kāshgharī and the only major work of Turkish literature from this period that has survived, the *Kutadgu Bilig* of Yūsuf of Bālāsaghūn, written in 461/1069, show distinct signs of Persian influence.

A pattern of rulership, an absolute monarchy of Turkish origin, supported by a mainly Turkish army and an almost wholly Persian bureaucracy, with courts in which Persian was the ruling language and Persian culture prevailed, was established by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 388/998, and continued in western Iran and Khurāsān until the coming of the Mongols. The slave-descended Ghaznavids appear to have rejected the whole of their Turkish heritage except their ability to speak the language (e.g. TB 615), and like Farrukhī, the son of a *ghulām*, chose integration into the Perso–Islamic world of their Sāmānid masters as, so to speak, honorary Persians. The founder of the dynasty, Sebuktigīn, like other *ghulām* generals, kept his Turkish name, but his sons and grandsons had Islamic or Persian names, and his daughters had the Persian title of *hurra* rather than the Turkish title of *Khātūn* given to Qarakhānid and Seljuq princesses. Maḥmūd's sister is known to Bayhaqī as Ḥurra-i Khuttal; the Timurid historian 'Uqaylī calls her Khuttalī Khātūn, using the titulature of his own time. The Seljuqs, on the other hand, were free tribesmen, and took pride in and clung to their Turkish speech, Turkish names (Berkyārūq, Arslān Arghū, Sanjar), and Turkish traditions. They often maintained, even under difficult

circumstances, a sense of obligation, based on ties of kinship, towards the unruly Turkmen nomads who had helped them to win power (SN p. 105). They were scornful of the slave origin of the Ghaznavids; according to a story in Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* (p. 91), Arslān b.Isrā'il b.Seljūk, the uncle of Toghril Beg and Chaghrī Beg, described Maḥmūd as a freedman's son (*maulā-zāda*), and prophesied that his kingdom would fall into the hands of the Seljuqs. Sebuktigīn himself, in his own words as reported by Bayhaqī (TB 202–3), made no secret of the fact that he had been a slave, harshly treated by the slave-dealer who was his master, and evidently saw nothing to be ashamed of in this situation; the *Pand-nāma* attributed to him and Niẓām al-Mulk's account of his early life are more circumspect (Nazim 1933b, pp. 621 ff.; SN pp. 104–5).

In the field of external relations, the nearest and most powerful neighbours to the north-east of the Ghaznavid and Seljuq dominions were the Qarakhānid khānates of Transoxania and Kashgharia, whose rulers were converted to Islam in the third/tenth century, and became, like the Ghaznavids and Seljuqs, devout Sunni Muslims and patrons of Persian culture. After the collapse of the Sāmānid empire, they established themselves in the former Sāmānid capitals of Bukhārā and Samarqand. Their attempts to cross the Oxus and invade Khurāsān were beaten off by Maḥmūd on several occasions, culminating in the battle of Katar, often mentioned by Farrukhī (*Dīvān* pp.72, 86, 118, 176, 210, 259, 305, 366). There were to be no more major battles, but shifting alliances, the endemic dynastic infighting between different branches of the Qarakhānids, exploited by Maḥmūd, Malikshāh and Sanjar, marriage ties, especially during the Seljuq period, and possibly an implicit recognition of mutual interests in the face of the constant threat of nomadic invasions from further east, brought about a situation of uneasy coexistence. This occasionally shaded into alliance and nominal friendship, as in the famous meeting between Maḥmūd and Qādir Khān Yūsuf of Kāshghar and Khotan in 416/1025, described in great detail by Gardīzī (pp. 82 ff.). Under Malikshāh and Sanjar the Qarakhānids, weakened by internal disputes, became vassals of the Seljuqs. In the middle years of the fifth/twelfth century, these three dynasties, closely connected by ties of marriage and vassalage (the Ghaznavids had been tributaries of the Seljuqs since 511/1117; see Chapter 6), succumbed to successive onslaughts by semi-barbarian invaders, Qara-Khitay, Ghuzz, Khwārazmshāhs, and Ghūrids.

A distinction seems to have been made in practice, especially by earlier writers, between Turks who were external enemies and the assimilated Turks, mostly former slaves, who were accepted as fellow-subjects and as part of the society these writers knew and described. Nearly all the senior officers of the Ghaznavid and Seljuq armies came from this group. In the early Ghaznavid period, some of these slave generals, like the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh, appointed by Maḥmūd after the overthrow of the Mā'mūnid dynasty in 408/1017, and Qaratigīn Dawātī, the governor of Gharchistān, to whom

Farrukhī addressed a panegyric (*Dīvān* p. 328), achieved positions of considerable power. In the late Seljuq period, when the central control became much weaker, they founded independent principalities, the so-called *atabeg* dynasties, like the Zangids of Mosul, the Eldigūzids of Arrān and Azerbaijān, and the Aḥmadīlīs of Marāgha.

Though these Turkish generals were men of high standing, they seldom figure as patrons of poetry; the cases quoted above are exceptional. Of the 220-odd poems in Farrukhī's *Dīvān*, only two are addressed to non-royal Turkish individuals, and of the 350-odd poems in Mu'izzī's *Dīvān*, only about a dozen. The members of the ruling families were the only Turks who were serious patrons of poetry, though to what extent they were genuinely interested in poetry, or indeed understood it, must remain a matter of some doubt. They may simply have accepted that listening to poets reciting their works and rewarding them suitably was part of the ceremony appropriate to festivals, and one of the duties and perquisites of kings, indispensable, according to Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī, himself a poet, for the glorification of their achievements and the preservation of their name and fame (CM p. 45). The business of kings was seen to be war, and their appropriate recreations hunting and feasting; intellectual activities were for scholars, secretaries, experts in *adab*, not for the military elite.

It would seem, therefore, that most of the Turks prominent in society at this period, however distinguished their record as military commanders and governors, were little interested in intellectual matters. One reason may have been the problem of language. A Turk who had any claims to be an educated man would have had to be fluent in three languages, his own native language, Arabic, and Persian. Persian was the *lingua franca* of Khurāsān and Transoxania, the bridge between the Turkic languages of nomadic tribesmen and slaves and the Arabic of the heartlands of the Caliphate, the language of religion and still of virtually all scholarship, accessible to comparatively few. One or two exceptional Turks are known to have bridged the gap, with or without the assistance of Persian. The favourite of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān, was the patron of al-Jāhiz, who dedicated an essay on the virtues of Turks to him (*risāla fī manāqib al-atrāk*), and also of many poets, the owner of a great library, with a most un-Turkish passion for books (cf. Fihrist I 398). But there were very few like him. On the three occasions when Caliphal envoys came to Mas'ūd of Ghazna, in the summer of 421/1030 (TB 46–47), Muharram 423/December 1031 (p. 289), and Rabi' II 424/March 1033 (pp. 371–72), senior officials (Mas'ūd's confidant Abū Sahl Zauzanī on the first occasion, and Abū Naṣr Mishkān on the other two) did a more or less simultaneous translation of the Caliph's message for the benefit of those who were not fluent in Arabic (by implication, Turks).

There is no record of how Turks learnt Persian, or indeed Arabic. Neither the *Siyāsat-nāma* nor the *Qābūs-nāma*, in their chapters on the training of

ghulāms and the purchase of slaves (nos 27 and 23, respectively) have anything to say about teaching them to speak Persian. It seems to have been assumed that they would pick up the language in the course of becoming integrated into their masters' households. Professor Elton Daniel, however, has suggested[1] that the potential audience for Bal'amī's famous and very popular 'translation' into Persian of Ṭabarī's history, made on the order of the Sāmānid Amīr Manṣūr b.Nūh in 352/963, was likely to include the many Turks who lived in Transoxania as well as the predominantly Iranian population of the Sāmānid empire. Like the 'translation' of the *Tafsīr* made at about the same time, Bal'ami's work was intended specifically for people who knew little or no Arabic. While the standard of spoken Arabic was high in Khurāsān, according to Muqaddasī ('no speech is more correct than that of Khurāsān', Collins p. 33; Miquel p. 78), and there were famous libraries in Samarqand and Bukhārā, it was the '*ulamā*' of Transoxania who authorised the translation of the *Tafsīr*, which suggests that knowledge of Arabic in this frontier province was generally poor. The simplicity and liveliness of Bal'amī's translation lend colour to the idea that it may not have assumed a very high degree of literacy in Persian in its readers. An example of this is the long passage on the adventures of Bahrām Chūbīn, which is not in Ṭabarī's original and was presumably added by Bal'amī to please the Amīr, who claimed Bahrām Chūbīn as his ancestor. It would not present much difficulty to Turks with a modest knowledge of written or spoken Persian, and is an exciting story which would carry readers or hearers along with it. In this respect it can perhaps be compared with Shabānkāra'ī's *Majma' al-ansāb*, which is also an easy read, and although originally dedicated to Abū Sa'īd's Persian vizier Ghīyath al-Dīn, the son of Rashīd al-Dīn, was perhaps aimed primarily at an audience with a limited knowledge of Persian.

It is not easy to judge whether many Persians and Arabs understood any more Turkish than was needed for basic communication with their slaves. Manūchihrī, who, judging by the number of Arabic poets he mentions in his *Dīvān* (e.g. pp. 70–78), was, or liked to present himself as, a man of considerable learning, evidently knew that there were different Turkic languages; in a well-known and much-discussed line (p. 112, l. 11) he distinguishes between poetry in 'Turki', presumably the language of the Qarakhānid khānates known to Kāshgharī as Khāqānī, and 'Ghuzzi', the language of the Oghuz Seljuqs. Bayhaqī recognised Turkish but seems not to have understood it; on one occasion the vizier Aḥmad b.'Abd al-Samad said something to a Turkish slave in his presence which he either did not hear or did not understand (it turned out to be an order to bring him a gift in return for secretarial services at a time when he was in fact acting as head of the *Dīvān-i rasā'il*) (TB 655). Aḥmad b.'Abd al-Samad had been *kadkhudā* to the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh for a number of years, and had had dealings with Turkish auxiliaries; he may well have had a wider knowledge of Turkish than was usual among Persian *dabīrs*.

The rulers, however, seem to have been, in most cases and to a varying extent, bilingual, or even trilingual. This introduces the subject of the intellectual attainments of the ruling families. The Ghaznavids appear to have been considerably superior in this respect to their Seljuq successors. Whether this was because of their early absorption into the Sāmānid environment, or their own inclinations, or is in any way connected with their tribal background, can only be guessed at. Barskhān or Barsghān, Sebuktigīn's place of birth, was in the area in which the Qarluq tribe originated; this group, to which the Qarakhānids belonged, appears to have been a good deal more culturally advanced than the Oghuz from whom the Seljuqs came. There is more contemporary evidence for their education and literacy, as indeed for much else in their lives, than for that of the Seljuqs. 'Utbī, Gardīzī and above all Bayhaqī, wrote from their own personal experience, as did 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī, or had access to eyewitness accounts. Nearly all the surviving sources for the early Seljuq period, of which the chief one in Persian is the *Seljūk-nāma* of Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, were written a considerable time after the event, and the sultans do not emerge clearly as personalities from the catalogue of campaigns and victories and the brief personal details that are provided.

None of the Seljuq sultans, in spite of their remarkable military achievements and the way in which, in the course of a generation, they turned themselves from a ragged band of nomadic predators (cf. TB 552) into the rulers of an empire that stretched from Transoxania almost to Baghdad, ever achieved the legendary status of Maḥmūd of Ghazna, exemplified in such later works as Niẓām al-Mulk's *Siyāsat-nāma*, 'Aṭṭār's *Manṭiq al-tair* and Sa'di's *Gulistān*. He was no longer 'the son of the Khāqān', as Badī' al-Zamān al-Ḥamadānī had called him early in his reign ('Utbī, I p.84); he was Maḥmūd of Zābulistān, the country of his Iranian mother, the champion of Iran against Tūrān, the Islamic king par excellence, while the Seljuqs, though their reign in Persia lasted much longer than Maḥmūd's, were seen essentially as aliens. The one exception to this is Anvarī's poem known as 'The Tears of Khurāsān' (*Dīvān* pp. 201–5), composed after the disaster of 548/1153, when Sanjar and several of his amirs were captured by the Ghuzz, after being twice defeated by them and forced to abandon Marv. The Sultan was held captive for three years and was released in 551/1156, but died the following year; the poem seems to imply that he was still alive at the time of writing. The poet calls on the wind (a familiar topos in poetry) to take a message from the people of Khurāsān to the Khāqān in Samarqand, the Qarakhānid Maḥmūd Khān, who was Sanjar's nephew and adopted son, appealing to him in passionately emotional language to come to the rescue of Khurāsān, ruined and devastated by the savage heathen Ghuzz. Times have changed; Tūrān and Iran are seen to be on the same side, allies, not enemies, and the Turkish Khāqān is the personification of the ancient kings of Iran, Kayūmars, Manūchihr, Khusrau the just (Anūshīrvān) and Farīdūn (p. 201, l. 13).

The legendary aspect of Maḥmūd arose in part from his enthusiastic, and sometimes forcible, patronage of poets and men of letters, dictated, it seems, not so much by a love of poetry and learning as by the realisation that the presence at his court of distinguished and well-known poets, constantly writing panegyrics to him of high literary quality, would add greatly to his prestige and reputation. His own education seems to have been of the standard variety; according to ʻUtbī (II p. 239) he studied the religious sciences, though Bīrūnī says he heartily disliked (*bāghida*) the Arabic language (Bīrūnī 1973, pp.12–13). His preferred poets were Persian, ʻUnṣurī and Farrukhī, and others less famous. These were writers of panegyric and *ghazal*, and rarely of stanzaic poems; narrative seems to have been less in favour. Firdausī's *Shāhnāma* is said to have had a cool reception from Maḥmūd, in spite of the panegyrics to him, his brother Amīr Naṣr and his vizier Isfarā'īnī with which it is studded; the history of the ancient Iranian kings had little appeal for him. There appears, however, to have been at least one poetic version of his own exploits. Farrukhī mentions a *Maḥmūd-nāma*: 'everyone reads the story [of the Ganges campaign of 410/1019] just as they used to read the tales of the *Shāhnāma*' (p. 66, l. 6), while ʻUnṣurī twice praises a work in verse called the *Tāj al-Futūḥ* (possibly a composition of his own) as a reliable history of Maḥmūd's campaigns: 'its *bayts* are like a necklace, its expositions like pearls' (*Dīvān* pp. 82, 86).

There seems to have been more interest in stories in verse that were concerned with private life and private emotions, topics which seldom feature in the *Shāhnāma*. The first Persian verse romances are recorded from Maḥmūd's reign. ʻUnṣurī was a pioneer in this field. His *Vāmiq u Azrā*, based on a Hellenistic romance, still survives, and according to ʻAufī, there were several more, of which only the names and an occasional quotation are left. One of these was *Khingbut u Surkhbut*, 'White Idol and Red Idol', apparently the love story of the lost Buddhas of Bāmiyān (de Blois 1992 pp. 232–33; Meisami 1987, pp.80–85). All of these were dedicated to Maḥmūd, as was the otherwise unknown ʻAyyūqī's *Varqah u Gulshāh*. The fact that Maḥmūd's chief court poet wrote such romances suggests that they were popular at court, though there is no other evidence for this. None of them were based on Iranian originals, and they are stories of heterosexual love, in contrast to the homosexual ethos of panegyric and *ghazal*.

Maḥmūd's immediate family were patrons of Arabic learning as well as of Persian poetry: Tha'ālibī dedicated his *Ghurar al-siyar* to Amīr Naṣr, who was also one of ʻUnṣurī's principal *mamdūḥs.* Of Maḥmūd's sons, Muḥammad was well-known for his love of books and of Arabic learning. But he also favoured Persian poetry; he was one of Farrukhī's chief patrons, for whom, as we shall see, Farrukhī seems to have felt real affection and friendship. Mas'ūd's interest in intellectual matters is more problematic. He and Muḥammad and Amīr Yūsuf, Maḥmūd's youngest brother, who was

only two or three years older than his nephews, were educated in *adab* as well as in Islamic sciences. Bayhaqī's informant on this early period, 'Abd al-Ghaffār, learnt the *qaṣīdas* of al-Mutanabbī from the princes' tutor, at Mas'ūd's suggestion (TB 112). Jūzjānī, on the authority of the *Maqāmāt* of Abū Naṣr Mishkān, has a story in the *Tabaqāt-ī Nāṣirī* of the apt and ominous quotation by Mas'ūd, displaced as *valī-'ahd* in favour of Muḥammad, of the very famous first line of Abū Tammām's *qaṣīda* on Mu'tasim's victory at Amorium in 223/838 (*Dīwān* I, pp.4074): 'The sword is more truthful than books'.

Bīrūnī, who had been brought to Ghazna from his native Khwārazm by Maḥmūd, dedicated his work on astronomy, *al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdi*, to Mas'ūd in 421/1030; according to Yāqūt, Mas'ūd offered him an elephant-load of silver, which he refused (EI2 'Bīrūnī'). This recalls Bayhaqī's story of a similar gift (*pīlwār*) to Zaynabī 'Alavī, one of Mas'ūd's favourite poets (TB 132, 274). Bayhaqī speaks highly of the Sultan's linguistic and stylistic skills, both as a speaker and a writer: 'When he spoke, it seemed to people that he was scattering pearls and breaking sugar [*durr pāshīdī ū shakar shikastī*]' (TB 20). He understood spoken as well as written Arabic, but his Persian was his strongest point: 'I have seen none of the sovereigns of this house who could read and write Persian as he did' (TB 292). He was apparently also skilled in architecture, designing, sometimes in his own handwriting, palaces and *maydāns* in Ghazna, Nīshāpūr, Bust and Lashkargāh (possibly the Lashkarī Bāzār complex, which has been revealed by excavation). 'This king was a marvel in everything [*īn malik dar har kārī āyatī būd*]' (TB 149). Like his father, he had his own court poets; Manūchihrī is the only one whose poetry has survived.

There is nothing in Seljuq historiography comparable with Bayhaqī's first-hand and detailed observation, over a period of ten years, of the complex and contradictory character of Mas'ūd. The *Siyāsat-nāma* contains a few personal anecdotes of Alp Arslān, and is based on Niẓām al-Mulk's experience of nearly 30 years as vizier to Alp Arslān and Malikshāh, but it is not a work of history, and throws light only by implication on its author's views about his masters. The *Seljūk-nāma* has brief descriptions of the appearance and most notable characteristics of the sultans, but 'the sources reveal very little about the formal education and intellectual attainments of the Seljuq princes' (Lambton 1988 p. 239). They were all, however, patrons of poetry and learning. 'Umar Khayyām was one of Malikshāh's *nadīms*, and played a large part in the reformation of the Persian calendar in 467/1074–5, which was ordered by Malikshāh, possibly on the initiative of Niẓām al-Mulk, and in the building of an observatory by Malikshāh, probably in Iṣfahān, which did not survive the death of its founder (Sayili 1960 p.161; IA p. 678).

Although there were many poets at Malikshāh's court, narrative poetry appears to have been no more in fashion than it was at the court of Ghazna.

Mu'izzī's comments on *Shāhnāma* heroes, whom he compares, much to their disadvantage, with Malikshāh and his champions, are almost always derogatory, and in one poem he accuses Firdausī point blank of lying (*Dīvān* p. 268). It was routine, however, for panegyric poets to extol their patrons at the expense of ancient heroes (there are many examples in the poetry of 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī), and Malikshāh, though he may not have cared for the *Shāhnāma* as history, appears to have respected it as a source of wisdom. In 474/1081–2, he ordered one 'Alī b.Aḥmad to compile a book of extracts from it (the *Ikhtiyārāt-i Shāhnāma*, which still survives in manuscript) on such topics as the praise of kings, the troubles of old age, and so on, with no narrative content (de Blois 1992 p.152). It has been suggested that this, or a similar work, could have been the source of the numerous moralising quotations from the *Shāhnāma* in Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* (Meisami 1994 p. 187), and possibly also of the verses from the *Shāhnāma*, which, together with verses from the Qur'ān and famous *ḥadīths*, were inscribed on the walls of Konya and Sīvās built by the Seljuq Sultan 'Ala' al-Dīn Kay Qubād in 618/1221 (Ibn Bībī III p. 258; Huart 1987 pp. 145–47, 174–75). It would appear from this that the Seljuqs of Rūm did not share the Ghaznavid sultans' and Great Seljuq sultans' lack of enthusiasm for the *Shāhnāma*; several of the sultans had the personal names of Iranian kings, Ghīyāth al-Dīn Kay Khusrau, 'Izz al-Dīn Kay Kāvūs, 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Qubād, and Jalāl al-Dīn Kay Farīdūn.

According to Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī, the House of Seljuq were all fond of poetry, but the most enthusiastic was Tughanshāh b.Alp Arslān, a prince of whom very little else is known (CM pp. 489). Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī says that in Alp Arslān's reign (455–65/1063–72) he governed Khurāsān from Herāt (perhaps he was the Amīr of Khurāsān whose *majlis* Nāṣir-i Khusrau despised), and spent all his time with poets; his *nadīms*, who included Azraqī, were all poets. Mu'izzī's poems suggest that of the Seljuq princes who were his patrons, the one with the most informed interest in poetry was Arslān Arghū, another son of Alp Arslān, who seized power in Khurāsān after the death of Malikshāh and was murdered there in 490/1097; this question and the poems involved will be discussed in Chapter 5. Sanjar, on the other hand, the longest-lived and for much of his reign one of the most successful of the Seljuq sultans, is said by Barthold (p. 308) to have been illiterate. Perhaps partly because of this, he fell under the influence of a series of Turkish favourites (Lambton 1988 p. 242) (see Chapter 6).

Both the eastern and western Qarakhānid khānates were centres of culture. In the western khānate, in which the principal cities were Samarqand and Bukhārā, closely associated with the Sāmānids, and which looked westwards to Khurāsān, this culture was, not surprisingly, Persian. Not much is known about the personalities and interests of individual khāns, but several of them, in particular Tamghach Khān Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm (444–60/1052–68), and his sons Shams al-Mulk Naṣr (460–72–3/1068–80) and Khidr

(473–4/1080–1), were respected as just and pious rulers, though, for obscure reasons, they were often at odds with the religious establishment of Samarqand and Bukhārā. Shams al-Mulk was a famous patron of learning and poetry; he showed great favour to ʻUmar Khayyām, who lived in Samarqand for a time and composed a treatise on algebra under the patronage of the chief *qāḍī*, before entering the service of the Seljuqs in 466/1073–4. Many poets came to his court. Niẓāmī ʻArūḍī lists about a dozen (CM p. 52), of whom the best-known are ʻAm'aq of Bukhārā, Shams al-Mulk's *Amīr al-shu'arā'* (the title given to ʻUnṣurī and Mu'izzī), and his rival Rashīdī of Samarqand. ʻAm'aq was highly regarded by other poets; Anvarī quotes him in the final lines of 'The Tears of Khurāsān', calling him *ustād-i sukhan* ('the master of discourse') (p. 205, l.3). A few of ʻAm'aq's *qaṣīdas* have survived, nearly all addressed to Shams al-Mulk. They are remarkable for their unusually long *nasībs*, sometimes much longer than the rest of the poem. In one poem of 134 *bayts*, the *nasīb* takes up 104; it is a detailed and highly coloured description of the lover's fearful journey to the beloved, in the manner of an Arabic *raḥīl*, through savage lands full of demons (*Dīvān* pp. 141–53). Other *nasībs* contain extremely ornate descriptions of the coming of night, the evening sky, the world in spring, the charms of the beloved, and so on. *Nasībs* of this type, very rare in early Ghaznavid poetry (Farrukhī's 'Journey from Sīstān to Bust' [*Dīvān* pp. 171–73] is the only example that comes to mind), seem to have become popular in the middle of the fifth/eleventh century. They were a feature of the poems of Mu'izzī's predecessor Lāmi'ī Gurgānī, his contemporary Mas'ūd-i Sa'd-i Salmān, and occasionally of the poems of Mu'izzī himself, as will be seen later. Their presence in ʻAm'aq's poems presumably reflects the taste of the patron; it assumes that the audience has an extensive Persian vocabulary and is familiar with the standard topics of Arabic–Persian poetry.

Another literary work which, according to Ateş, its editor, may, on the basis of internal evidence, have been written at a Qarakhānid court shortly before 508/1114, the date of the unique manuscript, is Rāduyānī's *Tarjumān al-balāgha* (1949), aimed at a Persian-speaking audience who probably knew little Arabic. Rāduyānī claims that it is the first work on rhetoric to be written in Persian, though, as he says, he follows an Arabic model, the *Maḥāsin al-kalām* of Naṣr b.al-Ḥasan al-Marghinānī. The examples he gives are all from lyric poetry (there is no mention of *maṣnavīs*), and he cites and translates Arabic poetry only in a chapter on translation (p. 280b). He quotes liberally from most of the major Sāmānid and Ghaznavid poets, and also from others much less well-known, including one, and possibly two, Turks. The first of these is the Amīr ʻAlī Pūr-i Tigīn, a mysterious character who, Ateş suggests, may possibly be the Būritīgīn (spelt sometimes in the Persian texts as 'Pūr-i Tigīn') of Bayhaqī and Gardīzī; he queries a suggested identification of Būritīgīn with Tamghach Khān Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm. The five

examples of this poet's work given in the text are not of much interest in themselves (they are quoted to illustrate various figures of speech and are on conventional amorous topics); but the fact that they were written by a Turk of high rank who was presumably trying his hand at imitating Persian poetry, and that Rāduyānī had access to this poetry (pp.102–6, 242a, 254b, 275a, 275a-b), is worth noting.

The other poet who may be Turkish is Ḥusayn-i Ilāqī, whom Ateş (p. 155) identifies tentatively with a Sāmānid poet Turkī Kāshī Ilāqī mentioned by 'Aufī (p. 263). Rāduyānī quotes a six-*bayt* passage from his verse as an example of how to write a poem without using the letter *alif*, a piece of literary showmanship (278a-b). Another point of interest occurs apropos of a *rubā'ī*, which Rāduyānī says was written by one Aḥmad-i Manṣūr 'when Qarakhān was in prison' (244b, pp.31–33). 'Qarakhān' has been identified by Ateş as Aḥmad Khān b.Khidr Khān (474–82/1081–9), who, after a turbulent reign that included a period of imprisonment, was executed in 488/1095 on a charge of heresy (IA X p. 165). The name 'Qarakhān' was a Turkish honorific; Maḥmūd of Ghazna was addressed by this title in a letter from one Khitā Khān in 417/1026, asking for diplomatic relations and a marriage alliance (see Chapter 2). The members of the dynasty to which Aḥmad Khān belonged were known as the 'Khānīyān' or 'Khāqānīyān', or sometimes as the 'Āl-i Khāqān' or 'Āl-i Afrāsīyāb'; the term 'Qarakhānid' by which they are generally known today is a comparatively modern one.

Patronage of Persian literature by these khāns continued until the late sixth/twelfth century. Muḥammad b.'Alī Samarqandī, the author of the *Sindbad-nāma*, written *c.*556/1161, dedicated it to Qilij Tamghach Khān Rukn al-Dīn Mas'ūd, who ruled from *c.*556/1161 to 573/1178, and was the principal *mamdūḥ* of the panegyric *qaṣīdas* of Sūzanī, also from Samarqand, who is much better known as a satirist. Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī himself, though 'Aufī lists him among the poets of Transoxania, apparently preferred to seek his fortune in Khurāsān and elsewhere, ending up at the court of the Ghūrids. When the Khwārazmshāh 'Alā' al-Dīn Muḥammad put an end to the western Qarakhānid khānate in 608/1212, he also ended something like 150 years of cultural patronage, which had produced many Persian works, perhaps not of the highest rank, but of excellent literary quality and great interest. It would seem that the khāns of Turkestan were not quite the ignorant and gullible characters depicted by Niẓām al-Mulk in a complicated and apocryphal story about Maḥmūd of Ghazna's attempts to obtain titles from the Caliph, who said that the Khāqān was an 'ignorant, outlandish Turk [*khāqān kam-dānish ast u Turk ast u ṣāḥib-i ṭaraf ast*]' (p.150, p. 202, Persian text).

The eastern Qarakhānid khānate, with its capitals at Kāshghar and Bālāsaghūn, faced eastwards, towards the Turkic heartlands and China, and the khāns appear to have favoured an indigenous culture, Turkish in language, Islamic in religion, and much influenced by Persian models. The

major literary product of this culture is the *Kutadgu Bilig* (translated as 'Wisdom of Royal Glory', Dankoff 1983), a 'mirror for princes' in verse, in the *mutaqārib* metre used by Firdausī and many other writers of *maṣnavīs.* It was written in 461/1069 and dedicated by its author, Yūsuf of Bālāsaghūn, to the ruler, Tabghach Bughra Khān, who rewarded him with the title of *Khaṣṣ Ḥājib.* The prologue, a panegyric to the Khān, is similar to many of the panegyric *qaṣīdas* of the Ghaznavid poets; it begins with a *nasīb*, a spring song on the beauties of nature, especially the behaviour of the birds, of which the author shows a wider knowledge than is usual in Ghaznavid poetry. There are other signs of Persian influence, but the form of the work is quite unlike any similar composition in Persian. It is a dialogue between various allegorical characters, with names like 'Highly Praised' and 'Full Moon', who present different points of view on how to achieve happiness, the subject of the poem. The tone is strongly didactic, and the book is without the anecdotes, stories and odd scraps of information that are a feature of Persian 'mirrors'; the language is of great interest, but there is little or no historical content.

The other product of this culture, Kāshgharī's *Dīwān*, also contains much Turkish poetry, but of a quite different type; it seems to represent genuine folk poetry. Nearly all of it is in four-line rhyming stanzas (a favourite pattern is aaab/cccb/dddb/, etc.), and some of the poems, like the elegy on the ancestral hero Alp Er Tonga, identified by both Kāshgharī and Yūsuf Khaṣṣ Ḥājib with the Afrāsīyāb of the *Shāhnāma*, are of considerable length. There are battle poems celebrating the exploits of heroes, poems on hunting and feasting, the changing seasons and love, and 'wisdom' poems containing moral precepts and advice, of a kind that can be found in almost any body of poetry. However, such topics as the debate or conflict between summer and winter (II 64), the fearsome journey of the phantom of the beloved to the lover (I 126), the beloved's 'drunken eye' and 'charming mole' (I 109), the comparison of spring flowers with a brocade carpet (I 146), and the *atlāl* topos ('desire forces me to weep day and night since my eye saw the emptiness of his abandoned camp and his hasty departure from his ruined dwelling' [III 284]) indicate that although the form and metres of their poetry are quite unlike those of Persian poetry, the poets had some acquaintance with its standard themes and images. There is one exception, the *rubā'ī* or *dūbaytī*. It has been suggested that this type of poetry, at one time thought to be of purely Persian origin, may have developed under the influence of Turkish folk poetry (EI2, *rubā'ī*); but the subject is a complicated and contentious one, and outside the scope of the present study (de Bruijn 1997 p.79). There is one major difference, however, between the Turkish and Persian use of quatrains; in Turkish poetry the quatrain is a stanza of a longer poem, while in Persian it is a complete short poem in itself. Not much more is known of Qarakhānid literature after this early flowering; it would appear that Persian took over.

It may be thought that a disproportionate amount of attention has been given to the literature produced in the Qarakhānid khānates and to individual writers; but, as so little is known about the rulers apart from their dynastic quarrels, the intervention of their neighbours in these quarrels and the resulting alliances and conflicts, it has seemed worthwhile to make some tentative assumptions about their intellectual interests and concern with cultural matters. Nothing has been said about religious literature, which is again outside the scope of this study. Religion was the other major source of conflict in the Qarakhānid khānates, giving rise to an almost continuous state of warfare between the khāns and the '*ulamā*', surprising in rulers who were notably pious, and in some respects stricter than their neighbours; for instance, Qādir Khān Yūsuf refused to drink wine at Maḥmūd's *majlis* when they met in 416/1025, on the grounds that it was not the custom of the Turkish kings of Transoxania (Gardīzī p.83). This is not, however, reflected in the court-orientated secular literature. There appears to have been a continuing interest in Persian literature, especially poetry, among the khāns of both khānates, or at least a desire to be seen as patrons of literature like their Ghaznavid and Seljuq neighbours and cousins. Poetry was also popular among Turkish speakers, judging from the poems (always anonymous) so freely quoted by Kāshgharī. This poetry was evidently known and performed outside Transoxania. Manūchihrī's reference to Turki and Ghuzzi poetry has already been mentioned, and the *Qābūs-nāma*, in the chapter on being a musician (*dar khunyāgarī*), advises the minstrel with an audience of soldiers to sing 'quatrains of Transoxania [*dū-baytī-hā-yi mā warā al-nahr*]' about war and bloodshed and freebooting (p. 112). These poems, both in form and subject matter, sound remarkably like some of Kāshgharī's; they must have been in Turkish, as the soldiers for whom they were performed were mostly Turks, and this would assume some knowledge of Turkish in the musicians.

Though the cultural influence of Persian on Turks in the upper reaches of society appears to have been considerable, there is very little evidence of a reciprocal interest in Turkic languages and culture among speakers of Persian. They were aware that Turks came from different tribes and areas; such names as Chigil, Khallukh (Qarluq), Ghuzz (Oghuz), Yaghma and Khotan occur fairly often in poetry, usually as the tribe or place of origin of some favourite. The *Qābūs-nāma*, in the chapter on buying slaves (pp. 102–3), mentions various Turkish tribes and their distinguishing characteristics, and the author makes a few general remarks about Turks, praising their courage and straightforwardness, but deprecating their slow-wittedness, ignorance and turbulence; he is not, however, interested in them as human beings, but as house slaves, not much better than animals. It is impossible to know whether Kāshgharī's *dīvān* had many readers outside Baghdād, and whether it reached, or was of interest to, Persians in Khurāsān who were Arabic scholars; Kāshgharī's scornful remarks about Persians suggest that he did

not see them as a possible audience. Only a single manuscript of the *Dīwān* has survived, copied from the author's autograph in 664/1266; its circulation was apparently not wide.

The expulsion of the racially Turkish but culturally Persian Ghaznavids from Khurāsān, and their replacement by the Seljuqs, caused a considerable change in the attitude of contemporary Persian writers to Turks. The rulers were no longer Persian, but openly Turkish, proud of their origin and ancestry, and this had to be borne in mind by scholars and panegyrists alike. Kāshgharī's *Dīwān* belongs to the very early years of Malikshāh's reign; he was a Qarakhānid, not a Seljuq, but his view that the Turks were a people chosen by God for rule is repeated by Mu'izzī in the *nasīb* of a poem addressed to Malikshāh, probably written not very long after the completion of Kāshgharī's work, and remarkably similar in phraseology: 'One must give one's heart to the love and service of the Turks, because God the omnipotent [*kirdigār*] gave the Turks dominion over the world' (*Dīvān* p. 536).

But pro-Turkish propaganda went back further than this. Some 20 years earlier, the poet and *dabīr* Ibn Haṣṣūl had been commissioned by Toghril Beg's vizier 'Amid al-Mulk Kundurī (executed early in Alp Arslān's reign through the machinations of Niẓām al-Mulk) to write an essay (*risāla*) attacking Ibrāhīm b.Hilāl al-Sābī's *Kitāb al-Tājī*, written *c.*367/978. This propaganda treatise in praise of the Būyids' attempts to prove their descent from Bahrām Gūr, a claim that was ridiculed by Bīrūnī in *Athār al-bāqiya* (p. 38). Not to be outdone, Ibn Haṣṣūl asserted that the Turks were descended from Tūr, one of the three sons of Farīdūn, a much more ancient lineage than descent from a Sasanian king. He then expatiates on their courage and a rather miscellaneous collection of other virtues, mostly of a primitive nature. They are accustomed to steppe and desert conditions, and are content with very few possessions. They are ardent hunters, and like to live off the game they bring down, especially deer and wild ass, and the booty they take in raids. They are only content if they are in command of troops; they will not put up with a subordinate position. They see it as their Islamic duty to make war on polytheists and infidels (i.e. they are good Sunni Muslims). They treat their prisoners humanely, but use slaves, prisoners and infidels for menial work and for the care of animals. The *Risāla* ends with fulsome praise of Toghril Beg and Kundurī (*Belleten* 4, Appendix pp. 1–51).

Ibn Haṣṣūl died in 450/1058; not much is known about him. His full name was Abū'l-'Alā' Muḥammad b.'Alī b.al-Ḥasan, Safī al-Ḥadratayn. He came originally from Ḥamadān, but grew up in Rayy. His father Abū'l-Qāsim was a noted *munshī* and was proverbial for his literary style and eloquence. The son wrote verse and prose; several of his poems are quoted in the *Tatimma* of Tha'ālibī, who met him in Nīshāpūr (*Tatimma* pp. 107–12). He headed the *Dīvān-i rasā'il* in Rayy more than once and held other offices. When Maḥmūd of Ghazna seized Rayy in 420/1029, Ibn Haṣṣūl found favour with

him and moved to Ghazna. He prospered under Mas'ūd, and was sent back to Rayy as head of the *Dīvān-i rasā'il*. Bākharzī visited him in Rayy and wrote him a *qaṣīda*; Bayhaqī does not mention him. He was a very highly respected writer of prose and verse in Arabic. He is recorded in the *Seljūk-nāma/Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* (pp. 108–9) as having won a substantial reward from Toghril Beg for choosing a suitable Qur'ānic quotation to send to the Caliph, to indicate that he was on his way to rescue him from the rebel general Basāsirī.

By the time that Mu'izzī began his career, at the beginning of Malikshāh's reign (465/1072), the whole of Iran, the western provinces as well as Khurāsān, had been ruled for a number of years (Fārs was the last to succumb, in 454/1062) by a dynasty that was purely Turkish, although, like its predecessors, it took over the established Persian bureaucracy, recognising the need for its inherited skills. The Qarakhānids were no longer enemies; they had intermarried with the Seljuqs, and, weakened by dynastic quarrels, eventually became their vassals. Persians and Turks did not love each other, and there were probably comparatively few social contacts outside official gatherings, but the traditional enmity between Iran and Tūrān was in effect a thing of the past, and this is reflected in Mu'izzī's poetry (e.g. *Dīvān* p. 532). In his panegyrics to his royal patrons, he often praises them as worthy successors to their great ancestors, going back as far as Seljūk, the grandfather of Toghril Beg and Chaghrī Beg, but otherwise there is little emphasis on their Turkishness.

There are two notable exceptions to this, in the unusually long *nasībs* of two poems to Malikshāh; these combine the familiar identification of the Turk with the beloved, nearly as frequent in Mu'izzī's poetry as in Farrukhī's, and praise of the beauty and charm of Turks in much the same language as that used in love poetry, with corresponding praise of their skill and daring as soldiers. The first of these poems (p. 176) consists almost entirely of a *nasīb*, the subject of which is the contrasting aspects of Turks:

> They are like pheasants when they hold the winecup; they are like lions when they hold the sword and spear …
> In battle they burn more fiercely than the fires of hell: they are fitter for the *majlis* than the *houris* of paradise.

The poet continues in this vein at considerable length, ending with the hope that he may find a love among these Turks; he then goes into a brief *gurīzgāh* and an even briefer *madīḥ*, which runs into the *du'ā'*. The poem is very repetitive (Turks are compared with lions at least four times), and labours its point without saying anything new or individual about them, but it is attractively expressed, and may have been written early in Malikshāh's reign as an indirect compliment to the young Sultan; there is no internal

indication of date. The second poem (pp. 53–67) has already been quoted in the context of the Turks' claim to a divine right to rule, but, like the earlier poem, it also has much on their beauty and seductiveness. Here the *gurīzgāh*, *madīḥ*, and *du'ā'* are much less perfunctory, and there is more on Malikshāh's Turkishness: he is the head of the family, the refuge of mankind and lord of the house of the Khāqān (*panāh-i khalq u khudāvand-i khāneh-i khāqān*) (1.12543). This poem may possibly date to 482/1089, when Malikshāh, after major campaigns that had involved conflict with his brother Tūtush in Syria, intervened in the western Qarakhānid khānate, captured Bukhārā and Samarqand, and deported Aḥmad Khān, mentioned earlier, to Iṣfahān.

It would appear, therefore, that although there was not much social integration between Persians and Turks, at least among the classes for whose relationship and activities there is written evidence (what went on at lower levels of society is unrecorded), there was in general no active hostility between them, except in exceptional circumstances; one example is the murder of Niẓām al-Mulk's grandson, Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, Sanjar's vizier for 11 years, by a favourite *ghulām* of Sanjar in 511/1118. Occasional high-level intermarriages are recorded. Bayhaqī describes the lavish and spectacular betrothal ceremony of the technically Persian Amīr Mardānshāh, 13 years old and a favourite son of Mas'ūd of Ghazna, and the daughter of the undoubtedly Turkish *sālār-i ghulāmān* Begtoghdī. The girl, like the young prince, was still a child at the time of the betrothal, and when the two were married a couple of years later, Begtoghdī gave his daughter a dowry of ten million dirhams, and many gold objects as well. Bayhaqī saw the inventory of the dowry many years later, and was astonished by it (TB 525–26). Nāṣir-i Khusrau was unusual in his hatred of the Turks, but his case, as an active and proselytising member of a much persecuted sect, was an exceptional one.

The Seljuqs took over the existing administration, and their rule seems to have been accepted fairly readily. One reason for this which has already been mentioned was the brutal treatment of Khurāsān and Rayy by the Ghaznavids. Another one may have been that the Seljuqs themselves were comparatively few in number and their coming caused little bloodshed among the civilian population; although their flocks did much damage to the economy of Khurāsān, there was nothing remotely like the devastation and slaughter brought about by the Ghuzz and Ghūrid invasions of the next century, and above all by the Mongols. Toghril Beg, for all his primitive nomadic background, proved to be a most capable ruler, respected by Persian and Turk alike for his authority, his justice and his piety. The sources suggest that, on the whole, a reasonable working relationship existed between Persians and Turks in their separate spheres; if the Persians, quick-witted and subtle like the Greeks of the classical world, were scornful of what they saw as the barbarism and backwardness of the Turks, the Turks,

while generally accepting the superiority and influence of Persian culture, were, like the Romans, confident in their military strength and ability to rule.

Notes

1 At a seminar in Oxford, 1995.

2

FARRUKHĪ SĪSTĀNĪ

His biography, background and patrons to 420/1029

The sources for the biography of Farrukhī, as for most medieval writers, are very scanty, and what follows is to some extent guesswork, based on his poetry and what can be deduced from it, and from references to him in the works of later writers. The earliest and most important source is Niẓāmī ʻArūḍī's *Chahār Maqāla*, written *c*.552/1157 when its author was an old man whose own sources of information went back some 50 years (CM 56–59). Niẓāmī ʻArūḍī gives the only detailed account of Farrukhī's early life and rise to fame and, although there is no means of verifying his account, and some inaccuracies elsewhere in *Chahār Maqāla* suggest that his information was not always reliable, it is both plausible and consistent with the information that can be gleaned from the *Dīvān*. This is more than can be said of a well-known and engaging anecdote in Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī's *Tārīkh-i guzīda* (*c*.731/1330) (p. 738), and the fairly brief notice of Farrukhī in Daulatshāh's *Tadhkīrāt ash-shuʻarā'* (*c*.892/1487) (p. 55). Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī's story that Firdausī met ʻUnṣurī, ʻAsjadī and Farrukhī having a picnic outside the gates of Ghazna, and was commissioned by them to write the *Shāhnāma* is chronologically impossible, as the *Shāhnāma* was probably completed by 401/1010, and, as will be seen, Farrukhī did not arrive in Ghazna before 406–7/1016. Daulatshāh's notice contains three major errors, which cast doubt on his general credibility. He says that Farrukhī was born in Tirmidh, not Sīstān, he confuses the *mamdūḥ* of the famous 'branding' *qaṣīda*, Fakhr al-Daula Abū'l-Muẓaffar Aḥmad b.Muḥammad, Amīr of Chaghāniyān, with Maḥmūd of Ghazna's younger brother, Amīr Abū'l-Muẓaffar Naṣr, *sipāhsālār* of Khurāsān, and, like Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī, he credits Farrukhī with the authorship of *Tarjumān al-balāgha*, a treatise on prosody that is now known to have been written by Muḥammad b.'Umar Rāduyānī between 481/1088 and 508/1114 (pp. 12–24). There are a few scraps of information in references to Farrukhī by other poets, which will be mentioned in due course.

The dates of Farrukhī's birth and death are both uncertain. The earliest date in his life that can be established with reasonable accuracy is the visit to Chaghāniyān that launched his career, and which must have preceded his

first approximately datable poem from Ghazna, the *qaṣīda* celebrating Maḥmūd's victory at Hazārasp in Khwārazm in Ṣafar 408/July 1017 (*Dīvān* p. 206). The coincidence of Naurūz with 'Īd al-Fiṭr, which Farrukhī mentions in the first of his two Naurūz poems to the Amīr of Chaghāniyān, enabled Ateş to fix the date as Shawwāl 406/March 1016, and this has been generally accepted (de Blois 1992 p. 109). The skill and elegance of the Chaghāniyān poems, the references to the pen and the sword, a frequent poetic topos, in a poem to the Amīr's *kadkhudā* 'Amīd As'ad, and to various *Shāhnāma* characters in the 'branding' *qaṣīda* and a Mihragān poem to the Amīr (pp. 4, 177, 190, 221, 333), demonstrate that Farrukhī was already a practised poet with considerable knowledge of his craft and its conventions. Where and how he acquired this expertise is not clear, and he himself has nothing to say about it. At the same time, the freshness and verve of his style and some of the details of his Chaghāniyān visit as related by Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī suggest that he was a very young man at the time. A birth-date of *c.*385/995 seems plausible; this would make him an almost exact contemporary of Amīr Yūsuf, one of his chief patrons, and very close in age to the princes Muḥammad, another major patron and friend, and his brother Mas'ūd, who were only three years younger than their uncle.

The traditionally accepted date of Farrukhī's death is 429/1037–8, given by Ḥidāyat in *Majma' al-Fuṣaḥā'* (Vol. I p. 439) without comment or source, but it seems possible that he may have died several years earlier. Only a small number of his poems can be dated to Mas'ūd's reign, and the contents of these poems, together with his contemporary Labībī's bitter lines about his untimely death, while the senile 'Unṣurī lingered on, suggest that he did not survive the death or disappearance of his principal patrons, Maḥmūd and Muḥammad, in 421/1030, and Yūsuf in the following year, by more than a couple of years:

> If Farrukhī died, why did 'Unṣurī not die? An old man lingered on, a young man died too soon.
> A wise man went and his going has done nothing but harm; a madman is left, and there's no profit in his staying.
> (Rāduyānī p. 32)

Of the twelve poems Farrukhī addressed to Mas'ūd, seven name him as 'Sultan', and two or three more may belong to this period, but the only indication of date in any of them is an apparent reference, in a *qaṣīda* that was probably composed for 'Īd al-Fiṭr in the autumn of 423/1031, to two events of the previous spring, the downfall of the general Aryārūq and the execution of the former vizier Ḥasanak on a charge of heresy (pp. 145–47; Meisami 1990 pp. 38–39).

Two poems to Aḥmad b.Ḥasan Maymandī, dismissed from the vizierate by Maḥmūd in 416/1025 and subsequently imprisoned, congratulate him on

his release from prison and restoration to the vizierate by Mas'ūd early in 422/1031 (pp. 157, 158). Other poems to him evidently belong to this second vizierate, but there is no *marthīya* or any reference to his death in Muharram 424/January 1033, which might have been expected from a poet who frequently expressed his devotion to Maymandī, and counted his brother Manṣūr b.Ḥasan and his eldest son 'Abd al-Razzāq among his patrons. In the concluding lines of one of the poems mentioned (p. 158, ll.14–16), Farrukhī apparently expresses a wish to retire:

> In the palace of your sons and in your service I've grown old; don't look at this black hair of mine!
> It's time for me to settle down in a little villa, and perhaps finish this life without anxiety.
> I've a small piece of business in hand, for which, because of where it is, I'm prepared both to travel and to stay at home.

He gives no further details, but asks Maymandī for a pack-horse (the word used, *bāragī*, could also be translated as strength or power), and ends the poem with the customary good wishes. It is not clear how seriously these lines should be taken (the poem begins with a cheerful *nasīb* about the delights of wine and music now that Ramaḍān is over), but the hint of a possible disappearance from the scene in the fairly near future, whatever the reason, would fit the evidence of the *Dīvān*. Thiesen's statement (p. 91) that Farrukhī was killed by a jealous lover is not corroborated by any other writer; there has perhaps been some confusion with Daqīqī, who was murdered by one of his own *ghulāms*, as there is no suggestion elsewhere that Farrukhī died a violent death.

Any account of Farrukhī's early life is necessarily a repetition of information given much more attractively in *Chahār Maqāla*, with one or two additional points. His father Julūgh was a *ghulām* of the Amīr Khalaf of the second Saffāriḍ dynasty of Sīstān, who was deposed and expelled by Maḥmūd of Ghazna in 393/1003. Julūgh's racial origin is uncertain, and efforts to find a meaning for his name have been inconclusive; Farrukhī, however, was in effect a Persian, brought up in a Persian-speaking milieu and educated as a Muslim. Like the Ghaznavids themselves, he had adopted the language and culture of his father's masters, and nothing in his poetry suggests that he thought of himself as in any way an outsider. He seems not to have been a slave, but a paid employee in the service of a Sīstānī *dihqān*. He wanted to marry a girl who was a slave or freedwoman (*mawlā*) of Khalaf, asked for a rise, and when this was refused, he decided to look for a patron elsewhere. Lack of success in Sīstān impelled him to undertake the long journey to Chaghāniyān (p. 333, ll.7–8), a small principality on the far side of the Oxus, to the north of Balkh, which, with its neighbour Khuttal or Khuttalān, was a famous centre of horse-breeding. The Amīr, a vassal of

Maḥmūd of Ghazna, was well-known for his love of poetry and generosity to poets. He must have been an elderly man at the time of Farrukhī's visit, as he had been a patron of Daqīqī, who died *c.*370/980, and of Munjik of Tirmidh, who flourished at about the same time; but as he was also a patron of Labībī, who was probably a near-contemporary of Farrukhī, his role as a patron extended over many years.

It is clear from Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī's narrative and from Farrukhī's own words that he had prepared his ground very carefully. He knew that at the time of the Naurūz festival the Amīr had his thousands of colts rounded up and branded; there were great celebrations, horses were given away, much wine was drunk, and it was likely to be a very favourable time for poets seeking patronage. The journey from Sīstān was long and difficult and the timing was crucial. The only detail Farrukhī gives is that he was travelling with a caravan of clothes (*ḥulla*), which provides him with a brilliantly exploited opportunity to use the *nasīb* of the poem to compare it with an embroidered silk garment, the material of which is woven of language and thought (p. 331). In the *madīḥ*, he introduces the main theme: praise of the Amīr as the valiant defender of his country against enemies (unspecified), and as the source of its life and prosperity. There is a brief passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* in which the poet returns to the theme of craftsmanship, deprecates his own lack of skill, and expresses his gratitude and pleasure at being received by the Amīr; then he brings in the final theme, the beauty of spring and the happy coincidence of Naurūz and 'Īd al-Fiṭr, in a descriptive passage which is like a second *nasīb* (a device sometimes used by Mu'izzī, perhaps to revive flagging attention after a long passage of praise); and the poem ends with a short prayer for a happy and propitious festival.

This poem has been analysed in some detail, both because of its importance in Farrukhī's career, and because of the skill and care with which it is constructed. The *kadkhudā* 'Amīd As'ad, to whom Farrukhī submitted the poem on his arrival in Chaghāniyān, found it difficult to believe that a travel-stained, ill-dressed and ill-shod young man from remote, turbulent Sīstān could have written so fine a poem, and set him to write another, specifically for the occasion. The result was the 'branding' *qaṣīda*, an expansive and lyrical description of spring and the scene at the branding-ground, followed by praise of the Amīr as a mighty warrior and a ruler appointed by God (pp. 177–81). There is a respectful reference to Daqīqī, perhaps a delicate hint that Farrukhī himself could be regarded as Daqīqī's successor, as 'Amīd As'ad had implied, by describing him to the Amīr as the best poet since the death of Daqīqī (CM 43). The Amīr was very much impressed by the two poems, and told Farrukhī to live up to his reputation as a Sīstānī and '*ayyār* (the notorious local toughs, both irregular militia and brigands, who were a feature of Sīstān and from whom the Saffāriḍ dynasty had sprung) and catch as many colts as he could (Bosworth 1963b pp. 167–68). By a lucky accident he ended up with 42 colts, much to the Amīr's

amusement; these were handed over to 'his people [*kasān*])' – he apparently had servants in spite of his poor appearance – and he received many other gifts and prospered in the Amīr's service. Farrukhī did not, however, stay long in Chaghāniyān. He had a grander patron in view than the ruler of a small vassal state, and moved on to Ghazna to try his fortune with Maḥmūd, probably in the autumn of 407/1016, as his last poem to the Amīr was for the mid-September festival of Mihragān, celebrating the vintage. A poem to 'Amīd As'ad with an autumnal *nasīb* suggests that he was no longer in Chaghāniyān at the time of writing (pp. 221–22, 224–25).

Although Farrukhī never again lived in Sīstān, he retained a strong Sīstānī patriotism; he kept in contact with relatives and friends in Sīstān and appears to have gone back on occasional visits. A poem to Maymandī's brother Manṣūr b.Ḥasan, the governor of Bust (pp. 335 ff.), describes a journey from Sīstān to Bust to visit the patron at his home in Maymand, north of Bust, presumably while the poet was on his way back to Ghazna after a visit to Sīstān. He says in a poem to Amīr Yūsuf that his Sīstānī connections were proud of his success: 'Every day another letter comes from Sīstān, congratulating me on being in your service' (p. 299, l.9). They also apparently kept him informed about the state of affairs in Sīstān. A *qaṣīda* addressed to Ḥasanak, composed for Mihragān 418/1027 after Ḥasanak's visit, two years after his appointment as vizier, is more illuminating about Farrukhī's feelings for Sīstān than any other of his poems. Ḥasanak is first commended for his service to Maḥmūd in the west (*maghrib*) (p. 196, l.5), presumably a reference to his appointment as *rā'īs* of Nīshāpūr in *c.*403/1012, when he was given the task of suppressing the activities of the Karrāmiyya of Nīshāpūr and their leader Abū Bakr Muḥammad, the previous *rā'īs* (TS p. 354). He is then praised at rather unusual length for putting the Sultan's service before all considerations of personal profit:

> The Sultan's business comes first and he has renounced the greed for wealth …
> The world is in his hands and his hands are clean of the world's wealth …
> No one can say that he coveted a *dang* from anyone.
> (p.196, ll. 6–7, 10)

This lack of concern with worldly wealth does not tally with what is known of Ḥasanak from other sources. He was a member of the famous Mikālī family of Nīshāpūr, an extremely rich man who lived sumptuously, and had incurred considerable enmity by his arrogance and what was seen as unjustified promotion; Farrukhī's emphasis on his incorruptibility can perhaps be seen as an answer to such criticisms. Nearly all the rest of this 25-*bayt* poem is a description of the deplorable state of Sīstān when Ḥasanak arrived and the immediate steps he took to remedy it, which Farrukhī quotes as an

example, from his own knowledge, of Ḥasanak's virtues. Parts of the following translation are submitted with reserve.

I have proof [*qiyās*] from Sīstān, which is my city [*shahr*], and I get news of my city from my kinsfolk [*khwīshān*].
My city is a great city and its land is famous; the men of my city are renowned for their lion-hearts.
When the Khusrau of Irān removed Khalaf, they suffered from the lawlessness of every evildoer.
[These men] uprooted cypress and jasmine from land and gardens, they stripped palaces and villas of walls and doors.
Every palace which had something more of beauty and elegance was destroyed like the city of the people of Lot.
Their stewards, having bought houses, abandoned them; wives were parted from their husbands, and sons from fathers.
The history of Sīstān stayed hidden from the King of Irān; years passed in sorrow and deep affliction.
When the King of the East called the Khwāja to the vizierate, he took on more work than many a Khwāja.
He called the *'āmils* to account, he gave audience to the people; husbands were reunited with wives, wives with husbands, and mothers with sons.
Houses were inhabited, and palaces were erected; gardens without greenery again became green.
Through the benefits of his justice the times in Sīstān are such that I cannot tell them from the time of Zāl-i Zar.
Sīstān is on the edge of the Sultan's dominions, [but] it is not without a share in his justice and equity.

(*Dīvān*, p.196, ll.12–24)

Two extra points are worth noting about this passage. When Farrukhī speaks of 'Sīstān' as 'my city' he means Zarang, the chief city of Sīstān, which was often known as Sīstān. The second point is the implied admiration for 'the time of Zāl-i Zar'; Zāl, the father of Rostam, was on this occasion exempt, as a Sīstānī, from the usual scornful remarks about *Shāhnāma* heroes.

Farrukhī addressed another five *qaṣīdas* to Ḥasanak, of which only one (no.170, pp. 333–35), has any historical interest. It contains a passage describing Ḥasanak's good deeds, in vague terms which, however, seem to echo the *qaṣīda* quoted above, and may refer to his activities in Sīstān:

In his time his country recovered 500,000 [*sic*] men whom his country had lost.
In dry river-beds, with this hope, they now sow pine and elm.

In ruined gardens, with this hope, they now plant violets and dog-roses.
These places, which thorn-bushes had taken over, are now gardens, rose-gardens and orchards.
Everyone has become absorbed in his work, and has regained his sense of purpose [*sar rasan*] through the good judgment and *barakat* of the Khwāja.

(p. 334, ll. 16–20)

The results of Ḥasanak's visit were by no means as conclusive or straightforward as Farrukhī's glowing picture suggests. As he implies, Maḥmūd had neglected Sīstān, isolated and of little strategic interest; Ḥasanak's predecessor Maymandī also seems to have given it little attention. The Ghaznavid conquest of Sīstān had been achieved with much brutality; it was resented by many Sīstānīs and there was continuing unrest. In the view of the strongly pro-Saffāriḍ author of the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān*, the Turks, by whom he meant Ghaznavids as well as Seljuqs, were the chief cause of Sīstān's troubles: 'the day they read the *khuṭba* in the name of the Turks in the pulpit of Islam was the beginning of calamity for Sīstān' (TS p. 354). Maḥmūd's brother Amīr Naṣr was for a time responsible for the province. According to the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* the *khuṭba* was read in his name in 400/1009–10, and he appointed the 'Amīd Abū Manṣūr Khwāfī as his deputy, personally visiting Sīstān in 402/1011 (TS pp. 358–59). Khwāfī continued to administer Sīstān after Naṣr's death in 412/1021, but constant complaints about his harshness roused Maḥmūd to send Ḥasanak to resolve the situation; according to Bayhaqī (TB 146) he had been *ṣāḥib-barīd* in Sīstān earlier in his career. Ḥasanak promptly dismissed Khwāfī and appointed another Khūrasānī, 'Azīz Fushanjī, as '*āmil*. This may, as Farrukhī's poem suggests, have provided some temporary improvement, but it did not solve the underlying problem of the Sīstānis' dislike of Ghaznavid rule and what they saw as an unacceptably high level of taxation. Maḥmūd was again forced to intervene; in 421/1030 he replaced Fushanjī, apparently without reference to Ḥasanak, who was still his vizier, with a member of the Saffāriḍ family, Amīr Abu'l-Faḍl Naṣr, who remained as governor and vassal to the Seljuqs until his death in 465/1072.

There were two Sīstānīs among Farrukhī's patrons. The poems addressed to them, while praising them both fulsomely as the pride of Sīstān, give no specific information about any posts they or their families might have held there or any part they might have played in its history, and have much less to say about his own feelings for his native province than the poem to Ḥasanak quoted above. The first of these patrons, the *mamdūḥ* of ten *qaṣīdas*, was the *faqīh* Abū Bakr 'Abdullah b.Yūsuf Ḥaṣīrī, a senior *nadīm* and close friend of Sultan Maḥmūd, probably about the same age or a little older. His name has in the past sometimes been written as 'Husayri', but Sam'ānī (*Ansāb* vol. IV

pp. 178–79) gives the vowelling as 'Ḥaṣīrī', and this is now the generally accepted spelling of the name. The holders of this name whom Sam'ānī mentions came from Rayy, Nīshāpūr and Bukhārā, but their dates and career details do not relate in any way to Farrukhī's patron, and there is nothing to suggest any Sīstānī connection.

Bayhaqī and Farrukhī seem to be the only sources for Ḥaṣīrī's biography. Farrukhī claims him as a fellow-Sīstānī, but Bayhaqī says nothing about his origin. He is mentioned several times briefly, and twice at length, in the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, and also in two passages in *Āthār al-wuzarā'*; the impression is given that he was not highly regarded by the bureaucracy. Abū Naṣr Mishkān, commenting to Maymandī in 416/1025 on the orientation of several prominent court figures during the intrigues that led up to the vizier's downfall, said that Ḥaṣīrī was intelligent (*'āqil*) and could be placated, but was chronically talkative and regarded as untrustworthy (pp. 157–58). He was an ardent supporter of Mas'ūd, and this, according to Mas'ūd himself, had caused him problems during Maḥmūd's reign. In Shawwāl 421/October 1030 he and the Ḥājib Mangitarak arrived at Mas'ūd's court in Herāt with a letter from Mangitarak's brother 'Alī Qarīb in Tigīnābād, explaining and justifying his support for and subsequent abandonment of Muḥammad. Ḥaṣīrī was given a sumptuous *khil'at*, appropriate to a *nadīm*, as a token of Mas'ūd's appreciation of his efforts on his behalf during the previous reign (TB 117–19).

The Sultan's goodwill was to stand Ḥaṣīrī in good stead during a highly discreditable episode in Balkh in the following spring (Ṣafar 422/February 1031), which, according to Bayhaqī, permanently affected his reputation and standing. This is recorded at length by Bayhaqī (TB 161–71) with a strong sense of personal involvement, as he was a neighbour of Ḥaṣīrī and his family and on good terms with them; he was later a friend of Ḥaṣīrī's son Abū'l-Qāsim Ibrāhīm, of whom he had a high opinion: 'prudent, far-sighted and very clever'. In brief, Ḥaṣīrī became involved in a drunken brawl with one of Maymandī's servants, who was beaten up by his *ghulāms* in spite of Abū'l-Qāsim's attempts to restrain his father and smooth matters over. Maymandī, newly appointed as Mas'ūd's vizier, saw this as a personal insult and a challenge to his authority from a man against whom he apparently had a long-standing grudge, and threatened to resign unless he was given a free hand to deal with the offender. He had both father and son arrested, and gave them the choice of 1,000 lashes apiece or the immense fine of 500,000 dinars, which they were unable to pay. Mas'ūd, hearing of this, employed the diplomatic ability of Abū Naṣr Mishkān, with Bayhaqī as his 'leg-man', to pacify Maymandī. Ḥaṣīrī, after a formal tongue-lashing by the Vizier, apologized profusely and convincingly (Bayhaqī says he was an eloquent old man), and the affair ended peacefully. Ḥaṣīrī privately told Bayhaqī of his deep gratitude to Abū Naṣr Mishkān. He died in Bust, in Ṣafar 424/January 1033; perhaps he had retired to his estates in Sīstān as a

consequence of the scandal. Bayhaqī comments that he and Maymandī, who had been constantly at enmity with each other, died at almost exactly the same time (TB 369).

This story has been related at some length because of the unique view of one of Farrukhī's patrons, not a member of the royal family, through the eyes of a notably honest historian. Bayhaqī knew Ḥaṣīrī in his later years, and, because of his own position in the *Dīvān-i rasā'il*, was well aware of the details. The picture is not altogether a flattering one, and Farrukhī, who adds a number of points that fill out brief references to Ḥaṣīrī in the *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī*, saw him with very different eyes. He makes much of Ḥaṣīrī's generosity to him and to many others. This is, of course, a standard topic of praise, but it does seem that Ḥaṣīrī was exceptionally kind to Farrukhī, 'kinder than any father to his son' (p. 183, l.8), and helped him to win the success (*zafar*) that was his heart's desire (l.9). The connection with Sīstān is mentioned in three poems (p. 174, l.13; p. 182, l.21; p. 186, ll.1 ff.), in very similar terms. Here, in contrast to the poem to Ḥasanak, the *Shāhnāma* heroes of Sīstān are decried: 'Nīmrūz [i.e. Sīstān] today gets more from the Khwāja and his family than it did from the hero Sam and Rostam-i Zar' (p. 176, ll.1–3). Farrukhī says, without going into details, that the family is a noble one and demonstrated its wealth in fine buildings (p. 175, ll.19–20). Ḥaṣīrī is praised for his learning, especially in '*ilm* (religious knowledge); it will be remembered that he was a *faqīh*, an expert in Islamic jurisprudence: 'He is a *faqīh* son of a *faqīh*, a *rā'īs* son of a *rā'īs*' (p. 182, l.20). He is also a master of *adab* and discourse (p. 175, l.18; p. 174, l.9; p. 46, ll.15 ff.), though the brief erotic *nasībs* that introduce nearly every poem to him suggest that he was not much interested in poetry. In religion, he was an ardent Shāfi'ī; he is described as the head of the *aṣḥāb-i ḥadīth* (i.e. the Shāfi'īs), the proof (*ḥujjat*) of Shāfi'īsm and the miracles of the Prophet (p. 173, l.23), and brings honour to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* (p. 322, ll.7–8). He is ferociously anti-Qarmaṭī, which wins Farrukhī's approval (p. 47, l.13); perhaps the poem was written during or after Maḥmūd's campaign in Rayy in 420/1029. He pursues heretics (*mubtadi'ān*) and the heterodox (*havā-dārān*), and knocks them on the head like snakes (p. 174, l.1).

With regard to the historical content of the poems, there is much emphasis on Ḥaṣīrī's influence with Maḥmūd and Maḥmūd's affection for him (e.g. p. 173, l.23; p. 322, ll.12 ff.), which was perhaps a factor in his unpopularity with Maymandī and other officials. He is the most powerful of the *nadīms*, constantly in company with the Sultan on both formal and informal occasions (p. 322, l.23), and allowed to sit in the Sultan's presence (p. 324, l.1), a rare privilege. He also, according to a group of poems that must postdate Somnath, as Maḥmūd is named in one of them as *Kahf al-Muslimīn*, the title granted to him by the Caliph in 417/1026 (p. 172, l.22), was put in command of a major military operation in Transoxania, perhaps in 418/1027. He held the rank of general (*sālār*) in the Sultan's army, as well as his

title of *nadīm* and the standing of a vizier (p. 173, l.7), and was given an elephant, a banner and a diploma, with the task of assembling an army to make war in Turkestan against the Great Khān or 'the Khān's enemies', whenever it was necessary (p. 323, ll.1–4). It seems that the army was made up of palace *ghulāms*, so large that it was housed separately from the royal camp (p. 362, l.22). Another poem, composed for 'Īd al-Fiṭr, in the year of the campaign, gives more details about it, with extravagant but obscure claims of a great victory:

> What he did in Turkestān to the Khān's army, the Shāh did to that army on the plain of Katar.
> All the Khāns and Tigīns and bold horsemen make obeisance to his army and to him.
> The Khān would say every day, 'God be praised, what sort of man is it that Maḥmūd has sent here?'
> This man took the glory [*āb*] of Turkestan at one stroke, by making preparations for war and by sacrificing gold.
> If he wished, with the sort of valour he brought to war, he would destroy all the riches [*khānumān*] of Turkestan at once.
> (p.176, ll.5–10)

There seems to be a suggestion in this passage that, in spite of the comparison with 'the plain of Katar', there was not much actual fighting; but textual problems in the following lines make it difficult to elucidate Farrukhī's exact meaning. The general sense, however, seems to be that Ḥaṣīrī put the fear of God into the unnamed Khan: 'The Shāh of Turkestan, who remembers the Khwāja's words, fears the *Khwāja* in his heart from afar' (p. 176, l.18). The campaign in question, according to Nazim, was intended to assist Qādir Khān against his rival 'Alītigīn; Nazim comments rightly on the vagueness of the references in Bayhaqī and Farrukhī, the only sources (p. 55, no. 6). Neither Gardīzī nor Ibn al-Athīr, in his excursus on the Qarakhānids (IA IX, pp. 209–13), refer to it at all. Bayhaqī, chronicling the events of 428/1037, makes a very brief mention of a war with 'Alītigīn, and 'the despatch of the *faqīh* Bu Bakr Ḥaṣīrī to Marv', and refers the reader to earlier chapters of his book, in which this was recorded (TB 526–27). It is difficult to judge the scale of the operation. Ḥaṣīrī was now old, with apparently little military experience; but his position as a close confidant of the Sultan, and his elephant and other trappings of rank, no doubt gave the campaign a prestige that it might not otherwise have deserved. The poem quoted above ends with a short passage justifying Ḥaṣīrī's possession of the elephant, regardless of the jealousy and anger it caused: 'May his elephant put its foot on a hundred lions, even if his elephant is on campaign and the lions are at home' (p. 176, l.21). Ḥaṣīrī's influence on Maḥmūd, if it was as great as Farrukhī asserts, may have extended to religious matters. According to Ibn

Khallikān, quoting the Imām al-Haramayn, Maḥmūd converted from Hanafism to Shafism; Bosworth (1963b) has expressed scepticism about this, on the ground that there is no other authority for the conversion. Farrukhī, however, seems to support the claim, though the words he puts into Maḥmūd's mouth should perhaps not be taken too literally: 'I learn valour from you, I take religion from you [*madhhab zi tū gīram*]' (p. 173, l.1). It has not been possible to suggest convincing dates for the poems to Ḥaṣīrī, apart from the group mentioned above.

The second and more problematic of the two Sīstānī patrons, the *mamdūḥ* of two *qaṣīdas*, is Abū Aḥmad Tamīmī, entitled the *Khwāja* '*Amīd-i sayyid* (p. 188, l.18), apparently a personage of standing in Sīstān. His father is twice named as the Amīr Ḥājib (p. 189, l.11, and p. 246, l.9, using the alternative reading), who is said to have held a *kadkhudā'ī* (stewardship, also vizierate), which put him on a par with the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād (*yāft kadkhudā'ī bā ṣāḥib bin 'Abbād andar kamāl hambar*, p. 189, l.11). Abū Aḥmad comes of a great family and is 'sharif-natured' [*sharīf khūyī*]; whether this repeated phrase (p. 188, ll.19, 22) implies descent from the Prophet or is merely a compliment is not clear. He is a master of *adab* and *dabīrī*, and possibly also a poet: 'If you want licit magic [*siḥr-i ḥalāl*], go and listen to the Khwāja's speech' (p. 189, ll.1–3). Sīstān should take as much pride in him as it does in its cities (p. 189, l.5). In the second poem, he is described as the glory of both Arabs and Persians, and the sun of the race of Tamīm, an evident reference to his probable descent from the tribe of Tamīm, which was one of the two principal Arab tribes settled in Sīstān (p. 236, l.3). There is more on his expertise in *adab* and *dabīrī*: 'The *adab* of the Ṣāḥib [Ibn 'Abbād] is worthless compared with his, the letters of [Hilāl] as-Sābī are poor and tedious compared with his' (p. 246, l.15). He is young (under 40), but with the wisdom of age (p. 189, l.9); he is also very handsome: 'If you want a picture of spring, go and look at the Khwāja's face' (p. 189, l.1). The tone of the first poem, from which these last two passages come, with its lavish and high-flown expressions of praise, together with a *ḥasb-i ḥāl* passage towards the end, suggest an unusually emotional relationship between poet and patron. It seems that some quarrel or misunderstanding had arisen in the previous year. 'Mistakes' were made by both parties, and 'the black crow' took the nightingale's place in the garden; but now all is well, the nightingale has returned to the garden, and it is the time for spring celebrations (p. 189, ll.13–20; p. 190, ll.1–5). The second poem is a straightforward panegyric, with no such emotional implications.

There is no indication of date in either poem, and it seems likely that they were written when Farrukhī was very young, before he left Sīstān for Chaghāniyān. Close study of the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* and Sam'ānī's *Ansāb*, together with Bosworth's 'The History of the Ṣaffārids of Sīstān and the Maliks of Nīmrūz', have provided no clues to the identity of Abū Aḥmad Tamīmī or his father, and Farrukhī gives only his *kunya*, not his *ism* or

patronymic. It seems possible, however, that he was distantly related to the Ṣaffārids, and perhaps a member of an influential power group. Khalaf b. Aḥmad became Amīr of Sīstān in 352/963, after the murder of his father Abū Ja'far Aḥmad, the *mamdūḥ* of Rūdakī's *mādar-i may qaṣīda*. He left Sīstān in the following year to go on pilgrimage, in fulfilment of a vow, leaving as his co-ruler and deputy a certain Abū'l-Ḥusayn Ṭāhir b. Muḥammad, whose mother 'Ā'isha was a direct descendant of 'Alī b.Layth, brother of Ya'qūb and 'Amr b.Layth, the founders of the Saffāriḍ dynasty.

This man's name appears variously in the sources, sometimes with 'al-Tamīmī' added. On a dinar from the mint of Sigistān dated 353/964, it is Ṭāhir b.Muḥammad al-Tamīmī (Bosworth 1994 pp. 303 ff.), and in the *Tarīkh-i Sīstān* Amīr Bu'l-Ḥusayn Ṭāhir b.Abi 'Alī al-Tamīmī (TS p. 327), while Gardīzī gives his son's name as Ḥusayn b.'Alī (*sic*) b.Ṭāhir al-Tamīmī, and also as Ḥusayn b.Ṭāhir (TS p. 47). Ṭāhir later quarrelled with Khalaf; he died in 359/970, and the quarrel was continued by his son Ḥusayn until his own death in 373/983, following a reconciliation with Khalaf. No more is heard of this branch of the Tamīmī family, but it seems possible that Abū Aḥmad was related to it. Khalaf later took Ḥusayn's *ghulāms* into his own service, treated them kindly, and offered them the choice of whether or not to stay with him; he gave those who joined him houses, estates and wives (TS pp. 339–41). Perhaps Farrukhī's father was one of these *ghulāms*, though there is nothing to suggest, in the two poems to Abū Aḥmad Tamīmī, that there was any family connection with the patron.

If the assumption that Farrukhī left Chaghāniyān in early autumn 407/1016 is correct, it seems to have taken him the best part of a year to establish himself in Ghazna and to be accepted at Maḥmūd's court, with the presentation of the Hazārasp *qaṣīda* (pp. 206–8). Neither his poem nor 'Unṣurī's (pp. 48–51) on the same subject give any indication of date or occasion, but they may have been composed for Maḥmūd's triumphant return from Khwārazm in late summer 408/1017. Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī's concluding words on Farrukhī imply that he found favour and wealth almost as soon as he arrived in Ghazna – Maḥmūd, not to be outdone by his vassal, treated the poet with even greater generosity – but the dates suggest otherwise. There is no hint in Farrukhī's poetry of how his introduction to Maḥmūd came about, and he may not have stayed in Ghazna for the whole of this early period. A well-known *qiṭ'a* suggests that he may have made an unsuccessful foray to Transoxania, perhaps in search of a patron at the Qarakhānid court, which would have been unlikely later in view of Maḥmūd's uneasy relationship with the Qarakhānids of Samarqand and Bukhārā:

> I saw all the luxury of Samarqand; I looked round garden and meadow, valley and steppe.
> When my purse and pockets were empty of money, my heart folded up the carpet of joy that belonged to the court of hope.

I'd often heard, from clever people in every city, that there's one Kauthar and eight paradises.
I saw a thousand paradises, a thousand Kauthars too; but what's the use, shall I go back with thirsty lips?
When the eye sees luxury and there's no money in the palm, [you are] headless in the light of the sun.

(p. 435)

'Aufī (p.283) says that this *qiṭ'a* refers to an abortive visit made by Farrukhī to Samarqand at an unspecified date; he was attacked by robbers, and his affairs were in such confusion that he went home without entering the city. No authority is given for this story, which does not tally with the content of the poem, which implies, with a bitterness unusual in Farrukhī's poetry, that he did in fact go to Samarqand, but because of his poverty could not do more than look at the luxuries it offered. The *qiṭ'a* may have been part of a longer poem, and both it and 'Aufī's story should probably be treated with some caution.

One of the first aims of any aspiring poet in Ghazna must have been to try to ingratiate himself with 'Unṣurī. Whether or not Daulatshāh's story (p. 44) about the dictatorial powers exercised by 'Unṣurī over Maḥmūd's court poets is true, he was certainly the senior poet at court, jealous of his position and resentful of rivals and interlopers, as his poetic duel with Ghadā'īrī of Rayy demonstrates (*Dīvān* ed. Dabīrsīyāqī pp. 161–79). The date of his birth is unknown, but the few scraps of information about his life, Labībī's lines, and the contents of his *Dīvān* indicate that he belonged to an older generation than Farrukhī. Although none of his surviving poems can be dated much before 403–4/1013–14, he had probably been poetically active at Maḥmūd's court for many years before this. Amīr Naṣr, who died in 412/1021, was a major patron of his, the *mamdūḥ* of eleven *qaṣīdas.* The longest poem in 'Unṣurī's *dīvān*, a miniature epic, is a detailed catalogue of Maḥmūd's victories from his earliest years, beginning with a battle in Ghūr during his father's lifetime, continuing with the succession struggle with his brother Ismā'īl, the victory over the last Sāmānid amir at Marv in 389/999, and the great series of successful campaigns in the next 20 years – the annexation of Sīstān in 393/1002, the conquest of Multān in 397/1006, the victory of Katar in 398–9/1008, and the Indian campaigns of 392–3/1001, 394–5/1004, 405/1014 and 409/1018–9 (*Dīvān* ed. Dabīrsīyāqī pp. 113–31). This poem, which has been assembled by Dabīrsīyāqī from a number of substantial fragments, chronicles events that preceded Farrukhī's arrival in Ghazna by many years, and which are barely, if at all, mentioned by him. One exception is the battle of Katar, recognised by both poets as a landmark that established the Oxus as the boundary between the Ghaznavid and Qarakhānid domains. 'Unṣurī's presence at this battle was presumably in his capacity as court poet, not as a soldier; he may also have accompanied

Maḥmūd on at least one Indian campaign. According to Khāqānī (pp. 680–81) he got a hundred slaves and a bag of gold for ten *bayts* on one victory in India, and became so rich that he had silver tripods and a gold dinner-service made for him. It seems, however, that he was willing to leave subsequent Indian journeys to the much younger Farrukhī.

'Unṣurī was the most respected and the most quoted of the early Ghaznavid poets, both by contemporaries and by later writers, and his *qaṣīdas* were regarded as models of excellence in panegyric poetry, but it is obvious from the number of unattributable quotations in later writers that much of his poetry has disappeared. Bayhaqī, who in general seems to have preferred the Sāmānid poets to the poets of his own time, greatly admired 'Unṣurī, and says he has quoted several of 'Unṣurī's 'brilliant *qaṣīdas*' (*qaṣīda-i gharrā*', a standard phrase) in the text of his work, although only one quotation is to be found in the surviving portion (TB 678). 'Unṣurī continued to be influential for some time after Maḥmūd's death. Mas'ūd, to whom he addressed a short poem, which may not be complete, and possibly another one (*Dīvān* ed. Dabīrsīyāqī pp. 142, 285), neither of them of much distinction, gave him a thousand dinars at the Mihragān festival of 422/1031 (TB 274). The most striking tribute to his standing among his fellow-poets is the long, elaborate and extremely accomplished panegyric, the so-called candle *qaṣīda* of Manūchihrī. How long 'Unṣurī's poetic talent and reputation lasted is uncertain; Labībī's lines suggest that he suffered a mental breakdown before his death, which, according to Daulatshāh, took place in 431/1039–40 (p. 46).

Although 'Unṣurī is the first major Persian lyric poet whose poetry has survived to any considerable extent, too little is left of the poetry of the Sāmānid period to make it possible to judge whether, or how far, he was an innovator, or generally followed in the tradition of his Persian and Arabic predecessors. Daulatshāh, whose statements about early Persian poets need to be treated with extreme caution, asserts that Farrukhī was 'Unṣurī's pupil (p. 55). While this seems unlikely in view of Farrukhī's proven expertise by the time he came to Ghazna, in some respects his poetry was almost certainly influenced by patterns set by 'Unṣurī, for example, in the frequent use of the erotic *nasīb*, which does not feature in his Chaghāniyān poems, and in 'dialogue' poems (*guftam/guftā*) (pp. 273, 312, 345). Part of one of his *qaṣīdas* to Maḥmūd appears to be a deliberate imitation of a *qaṣīda* by 'Unṣurī, although the emphasis is different. This poem (pp. 84–87) is provisionally dated to the spring of 414/1023 (Meisami 1990 pp. 34–36, 43); one of its chief topics is the folly of resistance to Maḥmūd, exemplified by a list of defeated opponents, each beginning with the words '*khilāf-i tū*', whose opposition caused their downfall. 'Unṣurī's *qaṣīda* (pp. 102–6) is a long meditation on this theme, also with frequent use of the word *khilāf* and a list of defeated opponents, but while Farrukhī, in a series of crisp one-liners, presents opposition to Maḥmūd as folly, 'Unṣurī goes much further and

denounces it as a sin against God and God's chosen ruler, delivering solemn warnings to any would-be adversary: 'O opponent of the King of Persia, fear unbelief: know that opposition to him is like opposition to God and will bring disaster … His service is like Noah's ark, his sword is like the Flood'. A point of interest is that while Farrukhī includes two groups of Indians among Maḥmūd's defeated enemies, the opponents listed by 'Unṣurī are all Muslims: the Sāmānids, the Saffāriḍ Khalaf of Sīstān, the Qarakhānid Ilig Naṣr, and the Mā'mūnid Khwārazmshāh, whose downfall is attributed to his disloyalty to Maḥmūd. The purpose of 'Unṣurī's poem, particularly if, as seems likely, it was composed not long after Maḥmūd's return from Khwārazm, may have been to pre-empt criticism of Maḥmūd for making war on fellow-Muslims; though the campaign could be represented as a matter of family honour and the protection of Maḥmūd's sister, the Khwārazmians harboured heretics.

Nothing definite is known of the relations between 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī; there is no record of any dissension or rivalry between them, and even if later stories linking them together are apocryphal, there is no evidence that they were on other than friendly terms. The indications of 'Unṣurī's influence on Farrukhī's poetry suggest that the younger poet admired his senior contemporary, and it does not appear that there was any spirit of competition between the two poets. Their *qaṣīdas* on the victory of Hazārasp, which were presumably composed for the same occasion, possibly Mihragān in mid-September 418/1017, are strikingly and, perhaps intentionally, different in style, structure and content. As Farrukhī's *qaṣīda* is probably his earliest surviving poem to Maḥmūd, and therefore one of the most important poems in his career, the two *qaṣīdas* will now be examined in some detail. The battle was fought between Maḥmūd's forces and the army of Khwārazm, whose *ghulām* generals had rebelled against and murdered the last Mā'mūnid Khwārazmshāh, Maḥmūd's brother-in-law, after he had been manoeuvred into accepting the Sultan as his overlord, much against the will of most Khwārazmians. Maḥmūd used this as a pretext to intervene and, in the event, to annex the enormous and rich territory of Khwārazm. The Khwārazmian troops were totally defeated, thousands of prisoners were taken, with much booty, and the rebel leaders were savagely punished. Bayhaqī tells the story in a long excursus on Khwārazm, much of which purports to be *verbatim* quotation of autobiographical material from a lost history of Khwārazm by Bīrūnī, who was himself a Khwārazmian and had spent seven years in the service of the Khwārazmshāh (TB 667–69). He gives only a brief account of the battle itself, and refers the reader to 'Unṣurī's *qaṣīda,* which he praises very highly both for its historical accuracy and its technical mastery, 'worthy of such a victory and such a *mamdūḥ*'. He quotes the first two lines, an adaptation of Abū Tammām's famous dictum that the sword is more truthful than the written word, and says that the poem is unique in 'Unṣurī's work (TB 678). It is true that there is no other poem like the

Hazārasp *qaṣīda* in ʻUnṣurī's *dīvān* as it has come down to us. Although there are many references to and praise of Maḥmūd's conquests, often in poems with a strong narrative content, it is rare to find in the *dīvāns* of ʻUnṣurī and Farrukhī poems which celebrate one specific victory and were apparently composed fairly soon after the event. Instances are the two Hazārasp *qaṣīdas* and Farrukhī's Somnath *qaṣīda,* and perhaps also his poems on Maḥmūd's return from Qannauj early in 410/1019 and from Somnath in the spring of 417/1026 (pp. 62–75, 52–54, 35–37).

ʻUnṣurī's *qaṣīda* is constructed more or less in accordance with Hamori's analysis (ch. 2) of panegyrics of Mutanabbī to Sayf al-Daula, which include narratives of specific campaigns and battles; this probably reflects the familiarity with Arabic poetry with which Manūchihrī credits ʻUnṣurī. The poem has no *nasīb*; it begins with a five-line 'gnomic meditation', a shortened and simplified adaptation of the first ten lines of Abū Tammām's *qaṣīda* that ends with brief words of praise for the skill and self-reliance of 'the Lord of the East'. There is also a possible tilt at the *Shāhnāma*: 'Look at the King's sword, don't read the book [*nāma*] of the past, because his sword is much more truthful than the book' (p. 48, l.2). ʻUnṣurī then sets the scene – the Sultan at the head of his vast and dazzling army of heroes, immune from the midsummer heat and the Oxus mosquitoes – before embarking on the chronicle, which he interweaves with praise of Maḥmūd. The Oxus is crossed, there is a short, vivid and impressionistic description of the battle, and a more detailed account of the aftermath – the shattered nerves of the defeated enemy, haunted by the horrors of battle, the huge numbers of prisoners, and the vast booty taken in Gurganj, Khwārazm's capital city. The two lines that precede the final *du'ā'* justify the enterprise; it was for Islam and the Prophet, because Gurganj was full of Qarmaṭīs and infidels. The *du'ā'* is a simple prayer for a thousand such victories, and for the poet himself to be able to celebrate them. The language, though striking, is unusually simple and straightforward, the narrative flow is clear and strong, and the poem is free of the bloodthirstiness and gloating over the slain, which often characterise victory *qaṣīdas.*

Farrukhī's *qaṣīda*, on the other hand, is a much more self-consciously clever poem than ʻUnṣurī's, and, unlike ʻUnṣurī's, it is not a narrative. It is very carefully crafted, and if it was indeed his first poem to Maḥmūd on a major occasion, it was evidently intended to impress the Sultan and the audience with all the poetic skills the poet could muster. He chose the difficult rhyme *-ang* (ʻUnṣurī had used the favourite *-r*), which, while it extended his own and his hearers' vocabulary with a number of unusual and specifically Persian words, in contrast to the Arabic inspiration of ʻUnṣurī's opening lines, was well-suited to the subject of the *nasīb,* the beloved's dual role as soldier and court page or musician, and the contrast between the arts of war (*jang*) and the music of the harp (*chang*); it also enabled him to refer to Maḥmūd's earlier victories in Sīstān (Zarang), Ghūr (Bushlang) and India

(Gang). The rhyme *-ang* seems to have been popular for display pieces. It was used by Manūchihrī, in a *qaṣīda* to an unidentified *ispahbad*.

The two poems complement each other. While ʻUnṣurī's *qaṣīda* is primarily a chronicle, with little direct praise of Maḥmūd, although the whole poem is a glorification of the leadership and moral and religious strength that led to his victory, Farrukhī is more concerned with the sequel: the war is over, the army has returned in triumph, and now is the time to look back on the campaign with justified pride, and to celebrate. Unlike ʻUnṣurī, Farrukhī followed the more conventional pattern of the panegyric *qaṣīda: nasīb, gurīzgāh*, with the *mamdūḥ's* names and titles, *madīḥ* and *du'ā'*. The *nasīb* sets the scene; the audience, in the person of the beloved, is invited to put aside the fatigues and dangers of war and turn to the delights of peace. The skilful use of word-play, alliteration and simile that is characteristic of the poem catches the attention right from the beginning. The fairly routine comparison of eyelashes to arrows and eyebrows to bows is particularly appropriate in this context, in which the beloved is seen both as soldier and charmer, and makes possible a neat transition to the *gurīzgāh*: the beloved's eyelashes transfix the heart just as the King of the East's spear transfixes iron and stone (p. 206, l.22, p. 207, l.1). The *madīḥ* begins with four lines of praise of Maḥmūd and his earlier victories, and then the main theme of the poem is introduced: ʻWhen he set his face towards Khwārazm, he brought wrinkles of terror to the face of the commander of the army of Khwārazm' (p. 207, l.6). There follows a short passage of *hijā*', mockery of the self-deception and treachery of the unnamed general, and a brief, vivid description of the consequences, the slaughter of the Khwārazmian forces, the capture and execution of the ringleaders, and the flight of the defeated remnants. The poem concludes with extravagant praise of Maḥmūd's clemency and his conquests, and open disparagement of rival heroic traditions. Maḥmūd's exploits outdo anything depicted in the *Artang*, the book of Mānī, and he is a greater soldier than a hundred Rostams, a wiser king than a hundred Hūshangs. The *du'ā'* is a wish that Maḥmūd may enjoy his victory, happy with his beloved and the wine-cup.

Farrukhī's *qaṣīda*, with its stylistic elegance and unusual vocabulary, assumes the existence of a sophisticated audience, connoisseurs of panegyric poetry. It was evidently well-received, as he soon became established as one of the royal family's chief poets. In the course of the next 13 years or so he wrote 44 poems to Maḥmūd, 45 to Muḥammad, and 41 to Yūsuf, as well as poems to a number of other patrons. Naṣr and Masʻūd are notable exceptions. There is only one poem to Naṣr, probably because of his early death (in 412/1021), and also perhaps as he was ʻUnṣurī's chief patron after Maḥmūd. There are 12 poems to Masʻūd, most of which appear to have been written after his accession to the sultanate, and this reflects the division between the rival factions of the two potential heirs to Maḥmūd. For much of Maḥmūd's reign, Masʻūd was his *valī-'ahd*, but their relations were often

uneasy (cf. TB 121–25), and Muḥammad was his father's favourite. Farrukhī seems to have attached himself at an early stage to Muḥammad and the faction that supported him, which included Yūsuf. In 408/1017–8 Muḥammad was appointed governor of Gūzganān, of which Balkh was the chief city, and a spring poem in praise of Muḥammad, but addressed to the city of Balkh, can probably be dated to Naurūz 408/1018, as it suggests that Muḥammad's arrival in Balkh is recent and has brought the city a second spring (p. 109). Farrukhī's praise of the beauties of Balkh and the surrounding area, with some topographical details, implies a knowledge of the city that may have been acquired in Muḥammad's entourage.

It appears that Farrukhī made his first journey to India in the autumn of 410/1019, when Maḥmūd followed up the capture and sack of Qannauj with a further campaign in the Ganges Dōāb, against Nanda (Ganda), the *rāja* of Kalinjar, and his ally Tirujipal (Trilochanpal), the new ruler of Qannauj and Bārī. There are two poems on this campaign; one, that celebrates Maḥmūd's return to Ghazna and was probably composed soon after the event, is mostly a narrative of the rout of Ganda's army, with the capture of many elephants and much booty (*Dīvān* pp. 52–54). The second and much longer one (*Dīvān* pp. 61–67) describes the defeat of the forces of Trilochanpal on the river Ruhūt, and from internal evidence must have been written several years later, probably in 415/1024. Although the graphic and detailed descriptions of the hardships and glories of the campaign sound like the record of an eye-witness, in neither poem does Farrukhī say explicitly that he was present; but in an 'Īd al-Fiṭr poem to Muḥammad, presumably written soon after his return, he makes it clear that he did go to Qannauj, apologising for any shortcomings in the poem, 'because the pain and weariness of the road to Qannauj have beaten me down and dazzled and confused my brain' (p. 96, l.21).

Two years later, Farrukhī went to India again when Maḥmūd invaded Kashmir for the second time, after an inconclusive raid in 406/1015; on this occasion he was in Yūsuf's train, with a horse and travelling equipment provided by the Sultan (p. 136, ll.20–21). The Ghaznavid forces, as before, besieged the virtually impregnable fortress of Lohkot for a month without success. Maḥmūd then abandoned the siege, left Kashmir and made for Lahore and Takeshar, the sub-Himalayan area west of the river Chenāb, where he disbanded his army to go raiding in the foothills; he himself returned to Ghazna in the following spring (Gardīzī p. 79). This is the only occasion on which Yūsuf is recorded as having accompanied his brother to India. It was unusual for Maḥmūd to take his closest relatives on his Indian campaigns; they were left in charge of major cities or strategic areas during his absence, in accordance with their official positions, Naṣr in Nīshāpūr, Muḥammad in Gūzganān or elsewhere, and Mas'ūd in Herāt. In his *fatḥ-nāma* to the Caliph al-Qādir on the Qannauj campaign of 409/1018–19, Maḥmūd specified the arrangements he made for the security of his realm before he left Ghazna in October. Muḥammad was to be in charge of the

area round Ghazna, with 15,000 horse and 10,000 foot; Mas‘ūd was given 10,000 horse and 10,000 foot, Arslān Jādhib was appointed *shaḥna* (military governor) of Balkh and Tukhāristān, with 12,000 horse and 10,000 foot, and Altuntāsh was made governor of Khwārazm, with 20,000 horse and 10,000 foot (Ibn al-Jauzī VII pp. 292–93). Yūsuf alone among the princes had no definite post, though he was to succeed Naṣr as *sipāhsālār* of Khurāsān, after Naṣr's death during the Kashmir campaign. It is just possible that Naṣr may have been with Maḥmūd on the 410/1019 campaign; Farrukhī speaks of an unnamed 'Amīr of Khurāsān' as having taken part in the battle with Ganda (p. 53, l.6).

Farrukhī is the only source to suggest that Mas‘ūd and Muḥammad campaigned in India with Maḥmūd. In a poem to Mas‘ūd, he says: 'You made many Indian swords ruby-red in India with the blood of the infidel' (p. 150, l.14), and Bayhaqī's informant 'Abd al-Ghaffār said that he saw Mas‘ūd hunting lions from the back of an elephant in India (TB 126–27), but neither author gives any indication of date or location. As for Muḥammad, Farrukhī makes a vague reference to an exploit at Kalinjar: 'My poem would never end if I were to say what he did to the idol of Kalinjar' (p. 109, l.4). There were two fortresses of this name in India, one in southern Kashmir and one in the Ganges Dōāb, neither of which was associated with a particular idol, and it is not clear which one Farrukhī had in mind. The Ganges fortress is perhaps the more likely; it belonged to Ganda, and according to Bīrūnī was one of the most famous forts in India ('India' I p. 202). It was besieged by Maḥmūd in 413/1022–3, but the campaign did not involve any notable military encounters and ended peacefully, with Ganda's submission and acceptance of vassal status. It was a considerable triumph for Maḥmūd, and marked the furthest eastward extent of his penetration of India. One poem to Muḥammad suggests that there may have been a plan for him to go to Kashmir: 'Wait until you go to Kashmir with your father, and take your troops in battle-array to Kashmir. … I am coming to see the war, and by your gift I have a horse and travelling gear' (p. 380, ll.11, 17). It seems doubtful whether this expedition ever took place, and doubt has also been expressed over the reality of Muḥammad's Kalinjar exploit.

Yūsuf, on the other hand, undoubtedly did go to India, and his activities there are mentioned several times by Farrukhī; he makes the most of his patron's heroic deeds and presents the Kashmir campaign as being considerably more successful than was in fact the case. Yūsuf attacked an unnamed Brahmin fortress, possibly Lohkot (p.128, l.7); he 'took the vale of Kashmir from the army of the Ray' (p. 390, l.21), and did to the army of Kashmir 'what the hunting falcon does to the partridge' (p. 393, l.20). He performed great feats of courage and skill in Lahore (p. 127, l.18), and killed a huge lion by the Biyāh, the river of Lahore (p. 350, l.17, p. 356, l.7). By the order of the Shāh (i.e. Maḥmūd), he took 'a thousand terrible elephants, each like a strong castle' (p. 295, l.21) from Gang. He may have had some

responsibility for the army's elephants, according to a puzzling passage in one of Farrukhī's poems to him, which also seems to suggest that he was the poet's original patron at court (p. 285, ll.7–12):

> I became a man through your fortune, and through your fortune I got fame and bread.
> You left me on the banks of the Jhelum with a number of elephants, lean and slow-moving.
> You said to me 'Fatten up the elephants, bring them their fodder!'
> Well, I'll do what you command, but within the limits of my strength and ability.
> It takes five months for an elephant to get fat, and those five months are the summer.
> I can't be away from your blessed court for five months.

It is difficult to believe that such valuable beasts would have been entrusted to the care of a court poet, though this may account for the rather surprising knowledge of the names of elephants that Farrukhī displays in a poem to Maḥmūd mentioned earlier (p. 85). He may have stayed in India for some months, as another poem to Yūsuf implies; anticipating a campaign to an unnamed destination, he talks about 'pitching our tents for another seven months in front of your pavilion' (p. 299, l.17). At all events Farrukhī was back in Ghazna for the review of the army and its 1700 elephants on the plain of Shābahār, near Ghazna, in spring 414/1023, and he describes it in an engaging 'question and answer' poem (pp. 345–46).

Farrukhī did not go to India again until the winter of 416/1025–6, when he accompanied the Sultan on the most celebrated of all his campaigns, the expedition to Somnath and the destruction of its famous temple. According to his *fatḥ-nāma* to the Caliph al-Qādir (Ibn al-Jauzī VIII p. 29), Maḥmūd set out in Sha'ban/October 1025. Just as he had done for the 410/1019 campaign, Farrukhī composed two poems on Somnath. One, comparatively short and factual, celebrates Maḥmūd's return, and, with its references in the *du'ā'* to 'the new spring', was probably composed for Naurūz 417/1026, soon after the event (pp. 35–37), and before the *fatḥ-nāma* would have reached the Caliph. According to Farrukhī, he was waiting for it with bated breath (p. 35, l.17); there is great emphasis at the beginning of the poem on the religious purpose of the expedition – the destruction of heathendom and the strengthening of Islam (ll.19–21). Maḥmūd had divine guidance, and his crossing of the sea near Somnath is compared with Moses's miraculous crossing of the Red Sea (p. 36, l.1).

The second poem, much longer (it is the longest of Farrukhī's *qaṣīdas*), more detailed and reflective, and very carefully constructed, would have been produced on a later though unspecified occasion. This is the famous Somnath *qaṣīda* (pp. 67–76), one of the finest of Farrukhī's poems, which,

apart from its literary qualities, is of considerable historical value for the reconstruction of the route taken by the Ghaznavid forces (Nazim 1931 pp. 115–20, 215–18). The opening of the poem, taking up a leading theme of the previous one, gives the rationale and justification for the enterprise: though the experiences of the army were as extraordinary and fantastic as the legendary journeys of Alexander, they were undertaken for the greater glory of God and Islam, not in a mere search for adventure and amusement. The vivid, expansive and picturesque narrative of Farrukhī, with its lively eyewitness reminiscences and warm expressions of admiration for Maḥmūd, is in striking contrast to the Sultan's own brief and bald *fatḥ-nāma* and Gardīzī's sober and rather low-key version of the Somnath story, which lays stress on the difficulties of the return journey and the heavy casualties in men and animals caused by desert conditions and attacks by the Jats of Sind (pp. 86–87). Farrukhī ignores or plays down the less successful aspects of the campaign. In his version all is triumph; even the sea admits defeat when confronted by Maḥmūd: 'Three times I have been with you on the boundless sea; I saw no waves, no fear, no tumult and no evil' (p. 75, l.11). In addition, Farrukhī records the incredible things he saw, both natural and man-made: the desert halting-places, the darkness at noonday when he could not see the fingers on his hand, the deadly two-headed snakes (p. 69, ll.1–4), and the great cistern of Mundhir: 'However much I think about it I cannot describe it' (p. 70, ll.9–13). He seems not to have accompanied Maḥmūd on the follow-up to the Somnath campaign, the punitive expedition in 418/1027 against the Jats and the 'sea-battle' on the Indus, which Gardīzī describes in unusual detail (pp. 88–89), but he refers briefly to it in one poem: 'I have seen waterfowl and fishes hunted; this year you hunted black lions [*shīrān-i siyāh*] in the water' (p. 88, ll.15–16).

The Caliph, in recognition of Maḥmūd's services to Islam and the 'Abbāsid caliphate, bestowed new titles on him, his sons and his brother in Shawwāl 417/November–December 1026, and granted him freedom to choose his heir (Gardīzī pp. 87–88). The virtual absence of these titles from Farrukhī's poems to Maḥmūd and his sons suggests that they did not value them very highly. Yūsuf was the exception; Farrukhī addresses him by his title of '*Aḍud al-Daula* in about a dozen poems, which makes it possible to date them within certain limits. Maḥmūd's relations with the Caliph al-Qādir were variable, in spite of frequent professions of loyalty and respect. In 415/1024, he was extremely annoyed (he called the Caliph a doting old fool) when al-Qādir accused Ḥasanak of being a Qarmaṭī; Ḥasanak, as leader of the pilgrimage from Khurāsān, had made a detour through the Fāṭimid territories of Palestine and Syria because of difficulties on his return route and had accepted a robe of honour from the Fāṭimid caliph al-Ẓahīr (TB 182–83). One of Farrukhī's poems to Maḥmūd reflects both the official viewpoint and what was probably the real one, an attitude to the caliphate that was both condescending and disparaging (p. 262, ll.7–9, 11–14):

> Baghdād … would be yours if you wanted it, but you maintain the dignity of the Commander of the Faithful.
> It is for the Commander of the Faithful that you crossed half the world …
> You have a hundred slaves a hundred times greater in strength, courage and virtue than [the caliphs] Muqtadir, Muʿtasim and Mustaʿīn.
> You observe respect … you see it as a duty.

The Somnath campaign and its aftermath were the last of Maḥmūd's Indian expeditions, and apparently also the last journeys on which Farrukhī accompanied him. During the years 415/1024 to 419/1028, Maḥmūd was much preoccupied with the activities of the Turks in Transoxania, on two very different fronts: the pressure on the northern fringes of Khurāsān from Turkmen nomads from beyond the Oxus, forebears of the Seljuqs who were to drive the Ghaznavids out of Khurāsān, and his relations with the Qarakhānid rulers of Transoxania and Farghāna. Farrukhī does not mention the nomads, who were dealt with brutally but not conclusively by Arslān Jādhib and Maḥmūd himself in 419/1028, but he has much to say about Maḥmūd's dealings with the Qarakhānids and contacts with rulers on the borders of China. After the defeat at Katar near Balkh of the Qarakhānid alliance under the Ilig Naṣr, which had invaded Khurāsān in 398/1007–8, Maḥmūd exploited the endemic infighting among branches of the Qarakhānid family to prevent the recurrence of any similar alliance or incursions. In 415/1024, he made a pre-emptive strike against ʿAlītigīn of Bukhārā and Samarqand, whose brother Tughan Khan had recently seized Balāsāghūn in the face of opposition from Qādir Khan Yūsuf of Kashghar. Fearing a combined attack from the two brothers, Maḥmūd used complaints of oppression by ʿAlītigīn's subjects as an excuse to cross the Oxus and invade Transoxania. Gardīzī describes the construction of the bridge of boats (he was evidently fascinated by the technology) and the reception given to Qādir Khan, who travelled from Kashghar to meet Maḥmūd near Samarqand, with a wealth of detail, which suggests that he may have been present, though he does not say so (pp. 81–85). The feat of crossing the Oxus with a large army and hundreds of baggage animals, including a great number of elephants, was calculated to impress not merely the Qarakhānid khans but also local rulers who were Maḥmūd's vassals; the Amīr of Chaghāniyān came to pay homage, and the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh came with his army to lend support. ʿAlītigīn fled to the steppes without offering battle: Maḥmūd sent the Hajib Bilkatigīn in pursuit, and ʿAlītigīn's wife and children were captured, though he himself escaped.

Farrukhī refers to these campaigns three times, twice briefly, and once in considerable detail. A Mihragān poem to Maḥmūd, possibly written in September 415/1024, twice mentions a successful and apparently recent

campaign in Soghdia, the area round Samarqand, though without any detail (pp. 346–48). Another poem of general praise to Maḥmūd (pp. 56–60) twice refers to Qādir Khān as a grateful friend. The third poem (pp. 251–54) is a general meditation on the campaign in Transoxania, the underlying theme of which is Maḥmūd's status as God's chosen vessel and the uselessness of opposition to him. The successful crossing of the Oxus is described as a miracle, a sign of God's favour. As he had done in the Somnath *qaṣīda*, Farrukhī implicitly compares Maḥmūd with Alexander, and contrasts his week-long bridging operation with Alexander's three months of fruitless effort (p. 252, ll.10–15). He comments rather scornfully on 'Alītigīn's flight and abandonment of his family, in the confidence that they would not be ill-treated by Maḥmūd. He praises Qādir Khān as a far greater monarch than 'Alītigīn: 'In rank, dignity and power, since the world began, the land of Turkestan has never seen a khān like Qādir Khān' (p. 253, l.9). But Qādir Khān came to Maḥmūd not as an equal, but to pay his respects like any ordinary mortal, and was granted the undreamt-of privilege of playing polo with the Sultan, his chamberlains and his slaves, and of sitting at table with him like his *nadīms*.

In a striking poem to Maḥmūd, Farrukhī warns the Sultan in very plain terms against accepting overtures from one 'Khitā Khān' (pp. 256–60). Gardīzī records that in 417/1026, after Maḥmūd's return from Somnath, ambassadors came from 'Qitā Khān' and 'Īghur Khān', offering friendship and requesting marriage alliances. Maḥmūd refused, on the grounds that the Khāns were infidels and there could be no question of intermarriage unless they converted to Islam: 'You are infidels and we are Muslims; it is not fitting that we should give you our sister and daughter' (p. 87). Gardīzī's brief notice does not do justice to the potential importance of these contacts. The major source on this embassy is the *Ṭabā'ī al-hayawān* of Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir al-Marwazī, who was one of the physicians of the Seljuq sultan Malikshāh. The book is nominally concerned with zoology but contains a considerable amount of geographical and historical information. According to Marwazī, China was divided into three kingdoms, Sin, Qitay or Khitay, and Uyghur, and he ascribes the mission to Maḥmūd from the kings of Qitay and Uyghur to their fear of the kings of Islam (probably the Qarakhānid khans of Kāshghar). 'Qitay' was the K'itan empire of southern Manchuria and north China, ruled by the Liao dynasty, whose racial origin is uncertain; the emperor Sheng-Tung (983–1031) had sent an expedition to Turkestan in 408/1017, which had been beaten off by the Khān of Kāshghar. The Uyghurs, the Turkic rulers of Kansu and Khocho, seem to have been the junior partners in the embassy. Farrukhī does not mention them, nor does Bīrūnī, who questioned the ambassadors who came from Qitay Khān about *khutū* (rhinoceros horn), which he says was alleged by the Chinese and the Turks of the east to react to the presence of poison in food (Bīrūnī 1936 p. 208). Marwazī gives Arabic versions of the letters of the two Khāns (he

does not say whether they are the original texts or translations, nor how he came by them) addressed to 'the Amīr of Khurāsān, Maḥmūd Qarakhān' (*Qara*, literally 'black', was also a term of respect to a senior in medieval Turkish, as in Qarakhānids) (Marwazī pp. 15, 19–21). The letter of Qitay Khān (presumably Sheng-Tsung) is written in the manner of a superior to an inferior: Maḥmūd is duty-bound to send news to the 'Supreme Khān' (*al-khān al-a'ẓam*). Qādir Khān has been ordered (*sic*) to make it possible for the envoys to pass through his territory, in virtue of the marriage alliance between the K'itan royal family and his son Chaghrī-tigīn. A wish is expressed for a marriage alliance with Maḥmūd and an exchange of gifts. The letter from Uyghur Khān is much warmer in tone; he writes to Maḥmūd as an equal, naming Maḥmūd as Sultan and himself as *Ilak al-jalīl*, and also asks for a marriage alliance.

Farrukhī's poem begins with a short *nasīb*, praising the devotion of the Sultan and his dynasty to Islam and the Caliph, and his superiority to all other kings. The *gurīzgāh* is followed by a brief overview of Maḥmūd's achievements, with the familiar emphasis on the futility of opposition to him and the benefits of his friendship. Farrukhī quotes the example of the Amīr of Kirmān, 'whom you brought under your shadow; through the *farr* of your shadow he has become the Amīr of Baṣra and 'Umān' (p. 258, ll.1–2). He is probably referring to the Būyid prince Abū'l-Fawāris Qiwām al-Daula, a son of Baha' al-Daula, Amīr of Fārs, who was appointed governor of Kirmān by his brother Sultān al-Daula after Baha' al-Daula's death in 403/1012. In 407/1016 the two brothers fell out; Abū'l-Fawāris was expelled from Kirmān and fled to Khurāsān to seek help from Maḥmūd. The Sultan, no doubt ready to seize an opportunity to intervene in Būyid affairs, received him kindly and sent him back to Kirmān with a force commanded by a senior general, Abū Sa'd al-Tā'ī (IA IX pp. 207, 236, 253, 259). In spite of the difference of *kunya*, this man is probably identical with Abū 'Abdullah Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Tā'ī, the commander of Maḥmūd's Arab cavalry, generally known as 'Muḥammad the Arab', who is mentioned by Bayhaqī as having incurred a near disaster in the Khwārazm campaign of 408/1017 (TB 678), by Farrukhī as a prominent player in the Qannauj campaign of 410/1019 (p. 53, l.5), and again by Bayhaqī as a general in the army of Mas'ūd in 423/1032 (TB 354); he is also the *mamdūḥ* of a poem attributed to 'Unṣurī (*Dīvān* ed. Dabīrsīyāqī pp. 149–50; p. 368 note). The Ghaznavid forces were at first successful, but withdrew after an attempt to dislodge Sultan al-Daula from Fārs was defeated with heavy losses, and Abū'l-Fawāris quarrelled with al-Tā'ī. He did, however, manage to re-establish himself in Kirmān, but without further help from the Ghaznavids; Ibn al-Athīr refers to him as *ṣāḥib Kirmān* in the years 415/1024, 418/1027 and 419/1028 (IA IX pp. 236, 253, 259). Though the governors of the coastal areas of 'Umān were appointed by the Būyids, and Baṣra was ruled by them, it seems unlikely that Abū'l-Fawāris was at any time in control of 'Umān and Baṣra as well as Kirmān.

Farrukhī's words must be seen as poetic exaggeration, but they do give some help in dating the poem, which must have been composed before Abū'l-Fawāris's death in 419/1028.

The main theme of the poem, arising from the embassy of Khitā Khān, is the attitude that Farrukhī considers Maḥmūd should take towards Turkish rulers in general, and towards possible expansion into Transoxania. There seems to have been some vagueness about the identity of Khitā Khān, who is regarded as being on a par with the Qarakhānid khans. Rather unexpectedly, in view of Maḥmūd's recent friendly meeting with Qādir Khān, Farrukhī launches into a tirade against the Turkish khans, accusing them of lawlessness, insincerity and treachery (p. 258, l.6). Like Firdausī, he depicts Iran and Turān as natural enemies, and sees Maḥmūd as the champion of Iran – far more so than any *Shāhnāma* hero. He claims that the Turks still bitterly resent their defeats at Maḥmūd's hands, especially the battle of Katar, and the enormous losses and devastation they suffered; because of their fear of Maḥmūd, they make a show of friendship, but there is no real goodwill between them and the Ghaznavids. It is better to leave them alone; also, there would be no economic advantage in the conquest of Turkestan, which is arid desert, unpopulated and in ruins (p. 259, ll.13–14). The Sultan's own realm is a hundred times more prosperous, and the famous gold mine of Zar Rūyān, near Ghazna, can produce more wealth in one week than ten times ten years' *kharāj* from Turkestan, while his Turkish *ghulāms*, the Khwārazmshāh and the Amīrs of Ṭus (Arslān Jādhib) and Gharchistān (Abū Manṣūr Qaratigīn, the *mamdūḥ* of pp. 328–31), rule provinces that are more fruitful than any khanate. The poem ends with what appears to be a plea for peace, a warning against unnecessary bloodshed, as Maḥmūd will be required by God to answer for the deaths of those killed by his army; the *du'ā'*, reinforcing this, wishes him enjoyment of the pleasures of peace.

What Maḥmūd's reaction was to this outspoken and possibly unwelcome advice, and whether it was Farrukhī's own opinion or whether he had been put up to it by a 'peace party', and also if it had any effect on his standing with his most important patron, are all questions to which historians would like to have the answers. In the last three years of Maḥmūd's reign, when it appears that his health was declining, possibly as a result of malaria contracted during the campaign against the Jats in 418/1027, there were certainly no more campaigns in India or Transoxania, but there was no lack of warfare elsewhere. The Turkmen nomads who had been allowed to settle in northern Khurāsān in 416/1025 were a continuing source of trouble, and the Sultan took the field against them in person in 419/1028, but as this was probably regarded as an internal matter, there is no mention of it in Farrukhī's poetry.

3

FARRUKHĪ SĪSTĀNĪ

His biography and patrons from 420/1029 to the end of his career

The final campaign of Maḥmūd's life, in 420/1029, marked a total change of direction in Ghaznavid 'foreign policy'. Apart from the not very successful intervention in Kirmān, in which the Sultan was not personally involved, all Maḥmūd's campaigns had been directed towards the east, with the successive invasions of the Indian sub-continent and the wars with the Qarakhānids, the chief purpose of which was to ensure that the Oxus remained as the impenetrable frontier of the Ghaznavid empire. But, in 420/1029, he turned his attention westwards; his forces invaded the Būyid kingdom of Jibāl and occupied its capital Rayy. Majd al-Daula, the nominal ruler of Jibāl, had been dominated by his forceful mother Sayyida ('the Lady'), the *de facto* ruler, for whom Maḥmūd apparently had considerable respect (TB 263); her death in 428/1028 gave him a pretext for intervention, on the grounds of Būyid misgovernment and the alleged presence of a large number of Ismā'īlīs in Rayy. His aim, however, appears to have been the establishment of a Ghaznavid kingdom in Jibāl, replacing the Būyids as the dominant power in western Iran and Iraq and as the protector of the Caliphate in Baghdād. Jibāl, because of its strategic position on the borders of the Byzantine empire, could be used as a springboard for attacks on Byzantium. This at any rate was Mas'ūd's view of the matter, as recorded by Bayhaqī. In a letter to Qādir Khān, written from Herāt in summer 421/1030, he claimed that the Caliph wrote to him after the conquest of Rayy and Maḥmūd's departure for Khurāsān, urging him to come quickly to Baghdād and rescue the Caliphate from the indignities inflicted on it by a group of menials (*adhnāb*) (TB 79). The letter should be regarded with some caution, however, as it was written at the suggestion of Abū Naṣr Mishkān, after Mas'ūd had instructed him to write to the Caliph explaining and justifying his own proceedings after the deposition of Muḥammad; Abū Naṣr seems to have felt that Qādir Khān, the Ghaznavids' chief ally in the east, should be treated as on a par with the Caliph. Mas'ūd also informed Qādir Khān of Maḥmūd's proposed division of his empire: the east was to go to Muḥammad and the west to Mas'ūd himself, whose concerns would be

(Persian) Iraq, the Ghuzz (the Turkmen nomads, many of whom had moved into Jibāl after their expulsion from Khurāsān), and 'Rūm' (i.e. Byzantium) (TB 80).

Whether this grandiose scheme for the westward expansion of the Ghaznavid empire was serious, or was the result of megalomania and lack of judgment arising from Maḥmūd's increasingly grave illness, which was apparent to Mas'ūd and others of Maḥmūd's immediate circle (TB 80; Gardīzī 1968: p. 92), is not clear; but it may also be connected with his uneasy relationship with Mas'ūd, his official *valī-'ahd*. The division of the empire reflected his preference for Muḥammad, who would have the great cities of Khurāsān, the capital Ghazna, and India, while Mas'ūd would be confronted with the ongoing problem of the Ghuzz and the challenge of carving out a new power base in the west, in the face of such potentially formidable enemies as the Kākūyid ruler of Iṣfahān and Ḥamadān, 'Alā' al-Daula Muḥammad, other local rulers, and ultimately the Byzantines. A poem of Farrukhī's to Maḥmūd, probably written at about this time, urging him to attack Byzantium, is perhaps not as far-fetched as it seems: 'I shall not sleep well until he says "Farrukhī, have you made a poem on the conquest of Rūm? Sing!"' (p. 265, l.16). Whatever Maḥmūd's real intentions were, he left Mas'ūd ill-provided with troops – less than 2,000, according to Farrukhī (p. 304, 1.14), in a poem to Mas'ūd; Mas'ūd commented bitterly that his father had hoped that he would return in disgrace and failure, with his tail between his legs (TB 218). In the event, he was successful, but his departure for Ghazna after Maḥmūd's death removed any realistic prospect of a permanent Ghaznavid presence in western Iran.

Maḥmūd's invasion of Jibāl was preceded and followed by dealings with his vassal and son-in-law Manūchihr b.Qābūs, the Zīyāriḍ ruler of Gurgān and Ṭabāristān, and as one of Farrukhī's *qaṣīdas* (pp. 348–49) is devoted to this subject it will be discussed in some detail. When Maḥmūd arrived in Gurgān with Mas'ūd on his way to Rayy, Manūchihr was in Astarābād: he avoided a meeting with the Sultan, but sent him 400,000 dinars and much food (*inzāl*). After the capture of Rayy, Manūchihr, in fear of Maḥmūd, according to Ibn al-Athīr, barricaded himself into an apparently impregnable mountain fortress; when Maḥmūd chased him out he fled to the impenetrable forests of Ṭabāristān. He sued for peace, which was granted on payment of 500,000 dinars, and Maḥmūd left for Nīshāpūr. Manūchihr is said by Ibn al-Athīr to have died shortly afterwards (IA IX 261–62). Although there is some dispute over the date of his death, it must have occurred before the summer of 424/1031, as Mas'ūd, discussing the affairs of Gurgān and Ṭabāristān at about this time, said they were in confusion because of the incapacity of Manūchihr's young son; the implication is that Manūchihr himself was dead (TB 264). Manūchihr's behaviour is hard to explain except on the assumption that he had good reason to be afraid of Maḥmūd. The prompt payment of the 400,000 dinars suggests that he may have been in

arrears with his tribute, but there may have been a more serious motive for Maḥmūd's anger. According to Bayhaqī's informant 'Abd al-Ghaffār, a devoted friend and adherent of Mas'ūd since their childhood, Manūchihr had been in secret communication with Mas'ūd for many years, sending him gifts and making every effort to win his favour. These contacts continued while Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd were in Gurgān, when Manūchihr, realising that Maḥmūd was ill and seeing Mas'ūd as his ultimate successor, tried to persuade Mas'ūd to make a formal treaty of alliance and friendship with him. 'Abd al-Ghaffār, believing that Manūchihr was not to be trusted and might betray Mas'ūd in order to curry favour with Maḥmūd, and aware that Maḥmūd had spies at Manūchihr's court, strenuously dissuaded Mas'ūd from signing such an agreement; but it is possible that Maḥmūd got wind of it and determined to punish Manūchihr (TB 135–38).

It does not appear from Farrukhī's *qaṣīda* that he had any knowledge of these undercurrents. After a brief meditation on the religious duty of absolute obedience to Maḥmūd, he comments on the actions of 'the dotard Manūchihr' in a surprised, scornful tone which suggests that the Ghaznavids found Manūchihr's reaction to Maḥmūd's presence in his country both puzzling and insulting. While acknowledging Maḥmūd's suzerainty, he made it clear that he did not want the Sultan in his lands, and tried to make his passage impossible: 'This house is yours; pass by on the other side!' and he destroyed the house (p. 348, 1.13), and the roads as well (p. 348, 1.19; p. 349, ll.3,8). Manūchihr asked for pardon, but Farrukhī accuses him of ingratitude and stupidity; although Maḥmūd had sent him more than 50 *fatḥ-nāmas*, he did not take warning from their contents (p. 348, ll.15 ff.). It is not known whether Maḥmūd was in the habit of sending *fatḥ-nāmas* to his vassals, and Farrukhī's tone seems to imply that this was unusual and a sign of favour; it has, however, been pointed out that *fatḥ-nāmas* seem to have been copied and widely disseminated. Manūchihr is mocked for his failure to understand Maḥmūd's determination and the strategic skill that enabled him to lead his army through appalling terrain, high mountains, dense forests and marshy roads: 'there were places where the elephants were swimming in mud'(p. 349, l. 6). Bayhaqī, who accompanied Mas'ūd on his campaign to the same area in March 426–7/1035, speaks in similar terms of the difficulties encountered by Mas'ūd's heavily laden army (TB 455). Manūchihr is insultingly compared with a pig wallowing in its native mud; Maḥmūd is the lion who knows his way round the forests far better than the pig. The *du'ā'* makes it possible to date the poem, which was composed for 'Īd al-Fiṭr, Shawwāl 420/ October 1029.

Maḥmūd's campaign in Rayy was conducted with great brutality and much bloodshed. The *fatḥ-nāma* he sent to the Caliph in the summer of 420/ 1029 (Ibn al-Jauzi 1937–40 VIII pp. 109–11, 161, 268, 287–89), much longer than the Somnath *fatḥ-nāma*, where the issue was clear and no justification was needed, is a detailed exposition of the ostensible reason for his attack on

the city and the surrounding areas. This was the alleged presence of large numbers of religious dissidents and free-thinkers, whom he described as heretics (*ahl al-ilḥād*) and divided into three groups, each more blameworthy than the other: Shī'īs, followers of extreme Shī'ī sects (*al-rafḍ*, *al-ghāliya*), and Bāṭinīs (Ismā'īlīs), whom he equated with infidels, and linked with the Mu'tazila and philosophers. These groups were accused by unspecified *fuqahā'* of committing crimes against orthodoxy; they neglected the regular forms of worship, they refused to pay the *zakāt*, they disregarded the tenets of Islamic law, they insulted the Companions of the Prophet, and practised antinomianism (*madhhab al-ibāḥa*). Such offences, according to the *fuqahā'*, made it lawful for Maḥmūd to take immediate and savage measures of repression. Large numbers of Bāṭinīs were crucified, together with the Mazdakites who lived in the environs of Rayy; all books considered heretical were burnt and many more taken away, together with large quantities of booty. Majd al-Daula himself, after being lectured by Maḥmūd on his failure to profit by the lessons of the *Shāhnāma* and Ṭabarī's history, and rebuked because of the size of his harem, was taken as a prisoner and spent most of the rest of his life in Ghazna (Gardīzī p. 92).

To what extent the accusations of religious irregularity and heresy in Rayy and Jibāl were justified is difficult to assess. The Caliph al-Qādir, fanatically anti-Ismā'īlī, and also bitterly hostile to Mutazilism and Shiism (Kennedy 1986 pp. 241–42), did not dispute them, and the people of Rayy were forced to submit to Ghaznavid rule. Farrukhī, in a rather muddled, ferociously anti-pagan and anti-Ismā'īlī poem, the first part of which is missing, and which, from internal evidence, postdates Somnath (p. 223, l.14), had urged Maḥmūd to attack Egypt, drench the desert sands with the blood of the Qarmaṭīs, and bring back the Fātimid caliph to Ghazna for execution by stoning. Two more poems are relevant to the Rayy campaign. In the first, composed for Mihragān, probably in the autumn of 419/1028, there is general praise for Maḥmūd's conquests, his crossing of the Oxus, and his magnanimity towards Qādir Khān (p. 266, ll.5 ff.). Rayy is then put forward as a worthy target (perhaps there was already talk of a campaign in the west, after Sayyida's death earlier in the year). No excuse would be needed; Qarmaṭīs were there in their thousands, and it would be a *ghāzī* raid greater than Somnath (ll.10–12). He should take the country (*diyār*) and give it to a slave: 'giving is the custom and habit of this great lord' (l.13).

The chief theme of the second *qaṣīda* (pp.19–21) is that obedience to Maḥmūd is a religious duty: disobedience to him is disobedience to God, and to rebel against him is to be an infidel or heretic (*kāfir*, *bad-madhhabī*, *bī-dīnī*). Whoever ignores or disputes this is, by implication, not a Muslim, and, therefore, lawful prey. (This, of course, gets round the awkward fact that many of Maḥmūd's opponents were Muslims.) Farrukhī quotes the example of the Amīr of Rayy (Majd al-Daula), whose folly, ingratitude and arrogance brought him down (p. 20, ll.7–11), and the nobles of Rayy, who belittled

Maḥmūd, thought themselves invincible and treated his Ḥājib discourteously, but ended on the gallows, with their estates and goods confiscated (p. 20, ll.17–21; p. 21, ll.1–8). Now that Rayy, like the world, belongs to Maḥmūd, his next project is to go on pilgrimage ('your inclination now is for Minā and Safā', p. 20, l.15). The poem is both a meditation and a commentary on the events in Rayy. Maḥmūd is like a prophet, a worker of miracles; he is portrayed as the supreme Islamic hero, with a realm even greater than Solomon's, and is almost on a level with God. This was obviously intended for popular consumption.

A notable and unattractive feature of several of Farrukhī's major poems to Maḥmūd in the last three years of his life is the brutal and contemptuous attitude displayed towards Maḥmūd's opponents, and even towards his allies. There are condescending references to Qādir Khān, who was a great man in his own country and an important ally, as the letter to him from Mas'ūd, mentioned earlier, indicates; dismissal of the approaches made by Khitā Khān is followed by a diatribe against the dishonesty and unreliability of the Turkish khans in general. References to Manūchihr b.Qābūs, a prince and indeed Maḥmūd's son-in-law, are crude, and there is disagreeable gloating over the fate in store for the Fātimids and already incurred by the Qarmaṭīs of Rayy (though, as we shall see in a later chapter, Mu'izzī used comparable language about the Crusaders). Whether this attitude was derived from Maḥmūd himself, or whether it reflected the views of influential members of Maḥmūd's entourage (the suggestion has been made that these were Turkish military men), is impossible to ascertain. This attitude seems uncharacteristic of Farrukhī, and contrasts strongly with his 'unofficial' poems to Muḥammad, Yūsuf and other patrons, and with his poems on the Indian campaigns, in several of which he took part. The Indian expeditions, though much emphasis is laid on their *ghāzī* aspect, are seen essentially as marvellous adventures, in a land full of wonders and treasures and strange legends, and in landscapes often utterly unlike the landscape of Afghanistan, Khurāsān and Transoxania with which the Ghaznavid armies were so familiar. The complicated relationship with the Turks, the everyday enemy, is entirely absent. The position is simple: the Indians are the enemy, idolaters and, therefore, fair game, but respected as brave soldiers who give a good account of themselves, and there are none of the xenophobic overtones that appear in the poems mentioned above.

After the punitive expedition against Manūchihr, which was to be the last military action of his life, Maḥmūd returned to Khurāsān in the late summer of 420/1029, first to Nīshāpūr, then by slow stages to Balkh, where he spent the winter. In the spring of 421/1030, he left Balkh for Ghazna, and died there on 23 Rabī' II 421/30 April 1030. Farrukhī's whereabouts during this period are uncertain. It has been suggested that he was out of favour at the time, and this could well be true; but there seems nothing in the texts of Farrukhī's poetry to lend any real support to this, unless his depiction of

himself in the *marthīya* as returning to Ghazna after a year's absence is to be interpreted literally. There is no indication whether he went with Maḥmūd to Gurgān or Rayy, though some of the details in the second of the Rayy poems may be from eye-witness evidence, not necessarily his own (e.g. p. 20, ll.2–8). His Mihragān poem on Rayy was probably presented in person, as all the court poets would have been expected to attend this festival, but in neither of the Rayy poems is there any hint that the Sultan was unwell. Gardīzī, the only source for the last few months of Maḥmūd's life, says that although he grew steadily weaker, he refused to admit that he was ill, and tried to deceive his grieving entourage (p. 92).

Another poem of Farrukhī's, however, suggests that whatever the state of his relationship with the Sultan, he was in Balkh during Maḥmūd's final illness. It was almost certainly composed for 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, Dhū'l-Ḥijja 420/ December 1029 ('This is the day of alms, of giving and of sacrifice [*qurbān*]', p. 268, l.11). It seems to have been written from personal knowledge, and implies that by this time there was deep anxiety about Maḥmūd's health. The poem is full of foreboding and hints that all is not well: 'God knows the secrets of men's hearts; how should I have knowledge of a profound secret?' (p. 268, l.14). Earlier in the poem there is emphasis on the dependence of the well-being and security of the realm on the health of the ruler: 'May God grant him long life, so that our world be not ruined [*tā nā-gardad jihān-i mā vīrān*]' (p. 268, l.1), words echoed by Gardīzī, perhaps deliberately, in a comment on Maḥmūd's death: '*ba-marg-i ū jihānī rūyī ba-vīrānī nihad*' (p. 92, l. 13). Relief is expressed that he has gone back to wine-drinking, after an interval without wine, but this is only temporary:

> Would that I could find a medicine to give him youth and life.
> Though it is not possible to give him youth and life, I have given him my heart – what else can one do?
> Of the prayers I've offered, day and night, for the body and soul of the lord of the world,
> If God were to listen to even one of them, he would live forever as a taker of cities, a conqueror of fortresses.
>
> (p. 268, ll.17–20)

This is the only poem in which Farrukhī refers to Maḥmūd's health, and may have been one of the last he wrote to him; the Sultan's mortal illness would almost certainly have ruled out the usual Naurūz celebrations.

Maḥmūd's death was seen as a watershed, the end of an era, and the possible beginning of a period of instability. The world had been turned upside down by this great event, according to Gardīzī, who says that the ignoble were honoured and the great despised. Farrukhī, in a similar vein, begins the *marthīya*, which is one of the finest and most famous of his poems (pp. 92–95), with a strikingly vivid picture, ostensibly through his own eyes

after a year's absence, of the city of Ghazna, thrown into total confusion by the news. The markets are closed, the business of state is suspended, palaces are abandoned, and high officials and royal ladies, courtiers and soldiers, their clothes disordered and all considerations of dignity and etiquette forgotten, are openly weeping and lamenting in the streets. The poem reads like an immediate reaction to Maḥmūd's death; but such poems were not composed in one night. It must have been known in court circles, and to Farrukhī himself, as we have seen, though perhaps not to the public in general, that Maḥmūd was very seriously ill, and, like others, the poet was engaged in a delicate balancing act between conflicting loyalties. The intensely emotional character of the poem, the refusal to accept that the Sultan is dead, the repeated appeals to him to get up, attend to business and welcome the son (*farzand-i ʻazīz*) who has come in haste to visit him (p. 93, l.21), followed by the sad acceptance that he has set out on his last and longest journey, and above all the omission of the name of the son and the perfunctory mention of the unnamed *valī-'ahd* in the final lines of the poem (p. 95, ll.1–2), reflect Farrukhī's ambiguous position. The son in question is most likely to be Muḥammad, who, as governor of Gūzganān, was comparatively near Ghazna, and would have seen his father during his winter stay in Balkh, but as he was not in Ghazna at the time of Maḥmūd's death this line, like the rest of the poem, which is an expression of mood rather than a factual statement, should not be interpreted too literally; as Farrukhī no doubt intended, the description would equally apply to Masʻūd. The principal mourner, however, is seen not as one of Maḥmūd's sons, but as his brother Amīr Yūsuf, to whom Maḥmūd had been father as much as brother (p. 94, ll. 9–13). This suggests that the *marthīya* may possibly have been commissioned by Yūsuf, the only senior member of the royal family in Ghazna at the time, who was in any case one of Farrukhī's major patrons.

Bosworth's detailed examination and translation of the poem (1991) provides a profitable study, but more account might perhaps be taken of the deliberate ambiguity over the identity of the son and heir, the brief wording being appropriate to either prince. That the brother, not one of the sons (only one is mentioned in any case), is presented as the chief mourner is surely a hint that the poet expected a dispute over the succession, but was careful not to commit himself publicly to either side. Farrukhī's equivocal attitude, combined with an evidently very genuine grief for Maḥmūd, lends additional fascination to the poem.

The news of Maḥmūd's death was kept secret for some time by members of his family, principally his sister Ḥurra-i Khuttalī and his kinsman the Ḥājib ʻAlī b.Il Arslān al-Qarīb, one of his senior generals, who immediately took charge of Ghazna. He ensured the maintenance of order, sent for Muḥammad and put him on the throne, with Abū Sahl Ḥamdavī, one of Farrukhī's patrons, as his vizier and Amīr Yūsuf as *sipāhsālār* (Gardīzī p. 93). Ḥurra-i Khuttalī, on the other hand, was an ardent partisan of Masʻūd,

who was in Iṣfahān, and it was she who informed him of his father's death, nearly a month later, in a letter in which she urged him to return to Ghazna as soon as possible to claim the succession, because Muḥammad would be unable to cope with the enormous responsibilities involved (TB 13–14). Mas'ūd had apparently been unaware of the gravity of his father's illness, and had been about to set off for Ḥamadān and Jibāl; he immediately changed his plans, left for Rayy at the end of May and spent three weeks there before making for Dāmghān on his way to Nīshāpūr. By this time support for Muḥammad was beginning to crumble in Ghazna in spite of the economic prosperity recorded by Gardīzī, and the news that Mas'ūd was on his way stimulated an increasing flow of desertions (Gardīzī pp. 93–94).

The grief and apprehension expressed in the *marthīya* can also be seen as a reflection of Farrukhī's anxiety over his own personal position now that he had lost his chief patron. It is clear from *Tārīkh-i Bayhaqī* and *Āthār al-wuzarā'* that in the latter part of Maḥmūd's reign the court was divided into two factions, for the most part mutually exclusive and hostile to each other: the 'Maḥmūdīyān', associates and friends of Maḥmūd both civilian and military, often of long-standing, who supported Muḥammad's succession, and the adherents of Mas'ūd, who for much of Maḥmūd's reign was the official *valī-'ahd*. Farrukhī, as the panegyrist and friend of Muḥammad and Yūsuf, belonged naturally to the 'Maḥmūdīyān', as did several of his other patrons, but with his first-hand knowledge of the two princes he must have seen Mas'ūd as the ultimate winner, and, like Manūchihr b.Qābūs, took measures to secure his future. He continued to write poems to Muḥammad, but although the headings of a number of poems in the *Dīvān* give 'Sultan Muḥammad' as the addressee, and some of them undoubtedly belong to his reign, Farrukhī never addresses Muḥammad as Sultan, or refers to him by this title, as he does with Maḥmūd and Mas'ūd. He also made a more obvious play for Mas'ūd's favour with a *qaṣīda* addressed to him in Iṣfahān, which must have been sent very soon after Maḥmūd's death, possibly with Ḥurra-i Khuttalī's letter, according to one suggestion, urging him, as she had done, to leave Iṣfahān as soon as possible and return to Ghazna as his father's rightful heir, favoured by the Caliph, loved by the people, and a seasoned war-leader (pp. 301–3).

This poem must have been sent without the knowledge of Muḥammad, and Farrukhī has been accused of treachery; but court poets were not expected to be heroes, and it seems to have been accepted that after the loss of one patron they were entitled to look for others where they could find them. At about the same time, however, Farrukhī was congratulating Muḥammad on his accession, also on the grounds that he was his father's rightful heir (pp. 41–43). He claims that Maḥmūd, at the time of his departure (*vaqt-i raftan*), had entrusted his army and his throne to Muḥammad, and praises the prince's virtues and good judgment (p. 41, 11.19 ff.). The phrase '*vaqt-i raftan*' is ambiguous, as '*raftan*' is often used metaphorically

for 'to die', and it could be translated as 'on his death-bed'; there is some doubt about exactly when Maḥmūd disinherited Mas'ūd in favour of Muḥammad, but the consensus of opinion seems to be that it was shortly before his death. The poem is not strictly a *marthīya*, but, unlike the *marthīya* on Maḥmūd, it follows the conventional pattern of such poems, which first express grief for the dead ruler, and then go on to praise and congratulate his successor. Accordingly, Farrukhī quotes Rabīnjānī's lines on the death of the Sāmānid Amīr Naṣr b.Aḥmad in 331/943 and the accession of his son Nūh b.Naṣr, to the effect that 'the king is dead, long live the king!' (p. 42, ll.6–9). The emphasis is on Muḥammad's strong (physical) likeness to his father, which is seen as a good omen. The final line makes it possible to date the poem fairly precisely: it expresses good wishes for the month of Khurdād (21 May–20 June).

The sequence of events during the five months from the death of Maḥmūd to the dethronement of Muḥammad is complicated, and there is no one reliable source that covers the actions of the rival princes in detail during this period. Gardīzī is the best source on Muḥammad, Bayhaqī on Mas'ūd, whose movements are much easier to establish than Muḥammad's. Although the surviving text of Bayhaqī's history does not begin until the conclusion of Muḥammad's reign on 3 Shawwāl 421/early October 1030 (TB 2–4), Bayhaqī goes back in time to give an exhaustive account of Mas'ūd's activities following his father's death and of his year-long progress from Iṣfahān to Ghazna. After hearing the news of Maḥmūd's death, Mas'ūd spent a month in Iṣfahān settling the affairs of the newly acquired province. He then spent three weeks in Rayy, as already mentioned, left for Khurāsān late in July, and arrived in Nīshāpūr in mid-August. Halfway through Ramaḍān (i.e. in mid-September), he left Nīshāpūr for Herāt, arriving there two days before the end of Ramaḍān. He celebrated 'Īd al-Fiṭr in Herāt with great splendour, and spent October and much of November there. He moved on to Balkh for the winter, remaining there until spring, and finally arrived in Ghazna in Jumāda II 422/June 1031, to a triumphant reception (TB 12, 17, 25, 38, 49, 56, 84, 245–46).

Muḥammad's movements are less well-documented. Gardīzī seems to have spent most of this period in Ghazna, judging by his knowledge of affairs there, but his account is more in the nature of a brief general survey of the reign, with few mentions of specific events or dates. The greater part of it is taken up by one episode, barely mentioned by any other authority except Farrukhī, who was also probably in Ghazna, the defection of Ayāz and the palace *ghulāms.* Gardīzī evidently saw this as highly significant, and, judging by the amount of detail he provides, may have witnessed the ensuing battle himself. Muḥammad had begun his reign well. His first action was to hold *maẓālim* courts, standard procedure for a new monarch; he gave orders for land registers and records to be inspected, for the purpose of rectifying taxation anomalies that had been causing hardship to the peasants, and he

was generous in his gifts to his supporters and to the army. Trade flourished, merchants came to Ghazna from far and wide, and prices came down (Gardīzī p. 93). Despite this, Muḥammad was unable to win the favour of the people; ʻAlī Qarīb, who appears to have been motivated partly by dislike and fear of Masʻūd, partly by a desire to respect the dead Sultan's wishes, and also by the immediate need to ensure order and calm, soon regretted his choice. While Masʻūd was still in Rayy, he and others, including Amīr Yūsuf and Abū Sahl Ḥamdavī, wrote to him expressing submission and making excuses for their conduct (TB 18).

The first open sign of discontent came in mid-June, 50 days after the death of Maḥmūd. Ayāz, Maḥmūd's favourite, persuaded the palace *ghulāms* to desert to Masʻūd with their equipment and horses, and won over ʻAlī Dāya (Abū'l-Ḥasan ʻAlī b.'Abdullah), a senior general and a relative of Maḥmūd. They left Ghazna for Bust, intending to go to Herāt, but on the way they were intercepted by Indian troops sent by Muḥammad; a fierce battle took place, with many casualties on both sides, including the Indian commander. Ayāz, ʻAlī Dāya and the surviving *ghulāms* managed to escape, and made their way to Nīshāpūr, where they were warmly welcomed by Masʻūd (Gardīzī pp. 93–94; TB 82). The reasons why Ayāz and ʻAlī Dāya abandoned the cause of Muḥammad are not entirely clear. It might have been expected that both of them, as part of Maḥmūd's household and family, would have stayed with his favourite son and chosen successor. The lavish rewards bestowed on Ayāz by Masʻūd must indicate his appreciation of this first overt change of allegiance, though he apparently had no very high opinion of Ayāz's military capacities and gave him no further employment (TB 264–65). Besides Gardīzī, Farrukhī is the only source for this episode; his one *qaṣīda* to Ayāz, written in Masʻūd's reign (p. 164, l.12), particularises Masʻūd's gifts to Ayāz: 40 ass-loads of dinars, the revenue (*māl*) of Bust, and the *kharāj* of Makrān and Qusdār (p. 164, ll.13, 17). Yūsufī, quoting Dehkhudā, says that Ayāz held the *imārat* of Qusdār and Makrān under Masʻūd, but gives no source; if this was the case, it was presumably after the downfall and imprisonment in the early summer of 422/1031 of Amīr Yūsuf, who had been packed off to this remote area to deal with a rebellious governor and collect the overdue *kharāj* (TB 69, 240, 249–50). Masʻūd's apparent generosity, as in other cases, may have had a sting in the tail. Farrukhī, however, praises Ayāz's loyalty to Masʻūd in the face of a rebel army (i.e. Muḥammad's troops), and his valour, greater than that of any other Persian or Arab hero (p. 165, 1.2).

By this time, Muḥammad, according to Gardīzī, had lost interest in affairs of state, and spent all his time on his private amusements and in wine-drinking. His intimates (*nazdīkān*) warned him that he was acting foolishly; he was incurring much criticism for neglecting his duties, and would lose his kingdom if he took no action against Masʻūd. Finally, at the end of August, four months after Maḥmūd's death, he mustered an army and left Ghazna for Bust, apparently with the intention of making for Herāt to challenge his

brother. He got as far as Tigīnābād, the exact location of which is unknown. Arends, the Russian translator of Bayhaqī, following Barthold, says that it was on the site of the ancient city of Qandahār (never mentioned by Bayhaqī), that is, half-way between the modern city of Kandahar and the river Arghandab, among high and steep cliffs (p. 848; Ball 1988 pp. 132–38). Le Strange, however, identifies it with the Bakrābād of Istakhrī and Ibn Hauqal, and suggests that 'Takinābād' may be a clerical error. The town had a Friday mosque in the market-place, and stood on a stream that flowed into the Qandahār river (p. 347). These identifications may not be irreconcilable; the town was evidently a place of some importance on the road from Ghazna to Bust, with accommodation for high-ranking visitors, as Mas'ūd stayed there for seven days in Dhū'l-Qa'da 425/September 1034, on his way from Ghazna to Bust and subsequently to Khurāsān (TB 432–33).

In Tigīnābād, the generals told Muḥammad in plain words that as he had no chance of defeating Mas'ūd, they would go to Herāt and make the best terms possible for themselves and also for Muḥammad himself. Muḥammad had no choice but to agree. He was imprisoned in a fortress that Bayhaqī calls Kuhtīz, in the charge of the Hajib Begtigīn; Amīr Yūsuf, 'Alī Qarīb and the other magnates, with the army, the treasury and the armoury, left for Herāt to join Mas'ūd (Gardīzī pp. 94–95; TB 2). Bayhaqī provides the sad and touching conclusion of the story of Muḥammad in the words of the *qawwāl* 'Abd al-Rahmān, one of Muḥammad's musicians and entertainers, told to Bayhaqī more than 30 years later, in 455/1063 (TB 70–76). At first he was treated by Begtigīn with respect and consideration; but when letters came from Mas'ūd that, in effect, stripped Muḥammad of everything of value that he and his harem owned, both in Tigīnābād and Gūzganān, and gave directions for their immediate transfer to the fortress of Mandīsh in Ghūr, the treatment became much harsher: 'it was as if they wanted to drag the son of Maḥmūd down into the mud' (TB 73). 'Abd al-Raḥmān's narrative ends with his last sight of Muḥammad, painfully entering the door of Mandīsh.

Ibn al-Athīr and Shabānkāra'ī provide some additional information, not all of which wholly agrees with Gardīzī's account. According to Ibn al-Athīr, Muḥammad arrived in Ghazna 40 days after Maḥmūd's death. This tallies with Gardīzī's description of the measures taken by 'Alī Qarīb in Ghazna, which suggest that some time elapsed before Muḥammad appeared on the scene. Ibn al-Athīr adds the picturesque detail that Muḥammad's cap (*qalansuwa*) fell from his head while he was on his way to the palace in Ghazna, and this was seen as an evil omen. In contrast to Gardīzī, Ibn al-Athīr depicts Muḥammad as eager to fight Mas'ūd for the succession, and refusing to listen to the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh's advice to come to terms with his brother (IA IX pp. 281–82). Shabānkāra'ī's lively and dramatic account of Muḥammad's reign is almost certainly, albeit rather loosely, based on lost volumes of Bayhaqī, judging by his description of the principal

events at Mas'ūd's court after the fall of Muḥammad, the deceptively gracious reception and subsequent arrest of 'Alī Qarīb, the clandestine departure of Altuntāsh to Khwārazm because of his fear of Mas'ūd, and the restoration of Maymandī to the vizierate, all of which follow the extant text of Bayhaqī fairly closely (pp. 76–77). There are some minor inaccuracies; for example, he says that Mas'ūd was in Balkh, not Herāt, at the time of Muḥammad's deposition, and he implies that Ḥasanak, not Abū Sahl Ḥamdavī, whom he does not mention, was acting as Muḥammad's vizier. He also adds the striking detail, unconfirmed by any other source, that Muḥammad tried to stab himself when he was arrested by 'Alī Qarīb's troops, but was prevented from doing so by his own *ghulāms*, whom he reproached bitterly (p. 74). The chief interest of Shabānkāra'ī's narrative, however, and what makes it valuable in spite of such colourful additions, is something which presumably came from Bayhaqī, the emphasis laid on the extreme reluctance of Muḥammad to accept the throne offered to him. Shabānkāra'ī describes him as 'thunderstruck [*mutahayyir*]' by the offer, aware of his own lack of capacity, and justifiably afraid of Mas'ūd's vengeance. This may have been retrospective; Gardīzī does not give the impression that Muḥammad was unwilling to succeed his father.

Of the 40-odd *qaṣīdas* Farrukhī addressed to Muḥammad, very few can be dated with any degree of certainty to his brief reign, partly because, as pointed out earlier, Farrukhī never names or refers to Muḥammad as Sultan; identification of date is wholly dependent on internal evidence. Two poems that address him as *valī-'ahd* (pp. 375, 384) must belong to autumn 420/1029, when Maḥmūd made him *valī-'ahd* in place of Mas'ūd. The first of these poems names him as 'the *valī-'ahd* of Maḥmūd Ghāzī' (p. 375, l. 14), and is in effect a letter of thanks for a splendid dress (*qabā*), worn by the prince himself: 'Nobody but a crowned head [*tājdārī*] wears dresses like this, you made me like a crowned head' (p. 376, l. 21). In the second poem, composed for Mihragān (p. 386, ll.1, 20), Muḥammad is 'the *valī-'ahd* of the Sultan of the world, the lord of every march [*marz*] and every march-lord [*marzdārī*]' (p. 386, l. 3). The tone of both these poems is light-hearted and there is no hint at all that the Sultan is unwell. The poem congratulating Muḥammad on his accession (p. 41), written in Khurdād 421/May–June 1030, has already been mentioned. Of the three short poems that precede it in the *dīvān* (pp. 38–40), the first two of which are simple in style and without *nasībs*, one certainly (p. 38), and the other two possibly, belong to this period.

The first poem (p. 38) is an expression of joy and good wishes to Muḥammad on his (evidently recent) accession, with a strong suggestion that it was popular with people in general. The word '*khalq*' occurs three times (p. 38, l. 19; p. 39, ll. 2, 6), each in a context which implies that Muḥammad was liked and admired; people could not see enough of him. He is lion-hearted and the son of a lion-heart, royal and of royal descent, a

successor who will uphold his father's name and reputation (p. 39, ll. 6–7). Grandees flock to his court: 'A hundred kings and a hundred viziers, better than Manūchihr and better than Kay Qubād' (l.12). The second poem (p. 39) should perhaps be dated to the previous year, as it seems to precede p. 37. Farrukhī thanks Muḥammad warmly for generous gifts, but reminds him delicately of a *qabā* that was promised but has not yet arrived: 'I'm not saying this out of presumption [*bī-adabī*] … I'm not doing anything which people ['*khalq*' again] don't do' (p. 40, ll.1–2). The last two lines (ll.3–4), however, suggest that Maḥmūd was no longer alive: 'Your father, the King of the East and the Sultan of the world, made my heart and soul glad in this respect. Do you do what your father did; what he gave his panegyrists, he gave with magnificence'.

The third poem (p. 40–41) is somewhat puzzling. According to the *du'ā'*, it was composed for 'the autumn festival [*jashn-i khazān*, i.e. Mihragān]; the *du'ā'* also implies that this coincided with 'Īd al-Fiṭr, and that Muḥammad was on the throne:

> As long as the night of the 'Īd is precious and cherished, like a dear one who has departed and is returning from a journey,
> May he have the crown and belt, and may it be that every king comes every day with his belt to do him service.
> May he see joy and gladness at this autumn festival, like the rain which comes in the days of spring.
>
> (p. 41, ll.12–15)

If the *du'ā'* has been correctly interpreted, the poem would have been written for 'Īd al-Fiṭr in Shawwāl 421/September 1030, that is, for the same occasion as the much more intriguing and ambiguous '*Ramaḍān raft*' *qaṣīda* (pp. 106–9), which hints at the approaching end of Muḥammad's reign and makes covert signals to Mas'ūd and his supporters; as this has been exhaustively analysed by Meisami (1990), no more will be said about it here. The present poem is quite different in tone, and was perhaps written a few days earlier. A very tentative suggestion is that Farrukhī was still trying to whip up support for Muḥammad, judging from the two major topics, the emphasis on his virtues, his intellectual qualities (*hunar* and *faḍl*), his justice, his military prowess and his courage, in which he is compared to his father (p. 41, 1.5), and the duty of subjects to continue to demonstrate their loyalty and respect. The second poem, however, makes it reasonably clear that, like the rest of Muḥammad's entourage, Farrukhī had changed his allegiance.

The only other poem which can be firmly dated to Muḥammad's reign is one not addressed to the prince but to the man who acted as his vizier, Abū Sahl Ḥamdavī, the *mamdūḥ* of three *qaṣīdas* (pp. 342, 400, 402). It seems appropriate here to examine the careers of and the poems addressed to this man and two other patrons of Farrukhī who were associates of Muḥammad

and Amīr Yūsuf, Abū Bakr Quhistānī and Abū Sahl ʻAbdullah ibn Lakshān, before moving on to the poems of Masʻūd's reign. Abū Sahl Ḥamdavī is a rather nebulous figure and, although he is frequently mentioned by Bayhaqī, no clear indication of a personality emerges. Farrukhī gives his full name as Abū Sahl Aḥmad b.Ḥasan, and his *nisba* as Ḥamdavī or Ḥamdūyī (not Hamdūnī as in some sources), rhyming it with '*maṣnavī*' and '*ma'navi*' (p. 402, ll. 20, 21), and also '*jāduyī*' (1.18). Farrukhī's praise of him is fulsome but not very informative. He came of a distinguished family and was a worthy son of his noble father (p. 401, 1.6); he was very rich and very generous (*passim*) and had a grand palace, finer than the palace of Kisra (at Ctesiphon) (p. 402, ll.8–9). He had apparently had a military career, perhaps very early in life – 'his dust was seen on the battlefield for ten to twelve years' (p. 343, ll.18–21) – but no details are given. In all three poems he is addressed as *rā'īs* (*khwāja-i rā'īs*, p. 342, 1.22; *rā'īs-i sayyid*, p. 402, 1.14); and, in the most historically interesting of the three (pp. 400–401), as *rā'īs-i ru'asā'* (p.401, 1.1). In this poem he is said to have received the rank of vizier (*pāygāh-i vuzarā*) from the prince (*malik*) (p. 401, l. 7), and 'in the king's palace he is *ṣadr-i dīvān* of the King of the East [*shāh-i sharqī*]' (1.15). The *du'ā'*, on the charms of Naurūz and the garden in spring, suggests that the poem was written very soon after Muḥammad's accession.

Bayhaqī gives the details of Ḥamdavī's career, on the authority of Maymandī's successor Aḥmad b.'Abd al-Samad. While still young he was appointed by Maḥmūd as *ṣāḥib-dīvān* of Ghazna and the areas of India nearest to Ghazna. For a long time he acted as apprentice or assistant (*shāgird*) to Maymandī, and then was Muḥammad's vizier (TB 390–91). Masʻūd, rather surprisingly, apparently bore him no malice for this, and made him chief *mushrif* of the kingdom (i.e. head of the *Dīvān-i ishrāf*, the intelligence service). After Maymandī's death he was considered for the vizierate, but Masʻūd rejected him because of his lack of experience. In early summer 424/1033, he was appointed, rather against his will, to replace the incompetent Ṭāhir-i Karkhī as *kadkhudā* of Rayy, outranking the *sipāhsālār* Tāsh Farrāsh; he was given a *khil'at* suitable for a vizier, with the title of *al-Shaykh al-'Amīd*, which greatly annoyed Aḥmad b.'Abd al-Samad (TB 367–68). In spring 429/1038, he was forced to abandon Rayy and take refuge with Sūrī, the governor of Khurāsān, after the Seljuq Turks seized Nīshāpūr and drove the Ghaznavids out of Rayy and Jibāl. He made his way back to Ghazna by slow stages; Masʻūd was angry with him and fined him 50,000 dinars, but later restored him to favour (TB 610). Nothing is known of his life after Masʻūd's reign.

Ḥamdavī was a man of culture who wrote poems in Arabic, which are quoted in Tha'ālibī's *Tatimma* (pp. 60–62), and an Arabic poem was addressed to him by the next patron of Farrukhī to be discussed, Abū Bakr Quhistānī (*Tatimma*, pp. 73–74). Quhistānī, the *mamdūḥ* of four poems by Farrukhī (pp. 17l, 197, 319, 325), seems to have been a much livelier and

more attractive character than Ḥamdavī. He was a highly regarded poet in Arabic, much praised by Bākharzī and Yāqūt, but he is not known to have written poetry in Persian. He was famous for his learning in both religious and secular literature, though, according to Yāqūt, his interest in philosophy made him unpopular in some quarters and led to accusations that he was irreligious (*Irshād al-'arīb* vol. V pp. 116–21). On the lighter side, he was very fond of jokes, stories, riddles and puzzles, and had a partiality for slave-boys that occasionally got him into trouble; Yāqūt, the source of this information, has more to say on his character and personality than any other source. This combination of qualities, and his varied career – he was a survivor who served first the Ghaznavids, then the Caliphal court in Baghdād, and finally the Seljuqs – perhaps help to explain why he became something of a legend in later literature, as a professional wise man and for his generosity to poets. The *Qābūs-nāma* (ch. 39) records that as a junior *nadīm* of Maḥmūd, he was able to interpret a cryptic message from the Caliph (a reference to the Qur'ān), in answer to a threat from Maḥmūd to send a thousand elephants to destroy the *Dār al-Khilāfa* after the Caliph refused to give him a diploma confirming his overlordship of Transoxania. Maḥmūd, overcome by remorse, accepted the Caliph's rebuke, gave Quhistānī a very fine *khil'at*, and promoted him to the next rank of *nadīms*.

A wild story in Sanā'ī's *Ḥadīqa al-ḥaqīqa* (pp. 563–64) presents Maḥmūd and Quhistānī in a rather similar light. Maḥmūd took it into his head to send an envoy to Constantinople with a message for the Emperor, claiming that he was Shāhānshāh of the world and demanding rich tribute; if this was refused, he threatened to destroy the Byzantine empire. His choice fell on Quhistānī, who in the end managed to dissuade him from the venture. Both these stories, though almost certainly apocryphal, are of interest because they illustrate a generally held view of Maḥmūd's character, voiced by Abū Naṣr Mishkān in a private conversation with Bayhaqī in the summer of 424/1033. If the Sultan came up with some far-fetched project and it was pointed out that this was unwise, he would be furious and would rage and storm; but after he had had time to think it over, he would change his mind and choose the right path (TB 399–400).

Mu'izzī bears witness to Quhistānī's generosity to other poets; he says that the poems Farrukhī wrote to him in thanks were 'sweeter than pure water' (p. 457, 1.10782), and he claims that Quhistānī became famous because he once (*yak-rāh*) bestowed riches on Farrukhī (p. 731, 1.16778). The Samarqand poet Sūzanī gives some details; listing gifts bestowed on several famous poets by their patrons, he says that Farrukhī once asked Quhistānī for an Indian slave, and instead was given 30 beautiful Turkish *ghulāms* (*Dīvān*, p. 266, 1.12). Historical information on 'Amīd al-Mulk Abū Bakr 'Alī b.Ḥasan Quhistānī's career comes from other sources. According to Rashīd Vatvāt, he came originally from Rukhkhāj, the area south of Qandahār and Bust, bordering on Sīstān, but there is no hint of any Sīstānī

connection in Farrukhī's poems to him. At some stage he became *rā'īs-i dīvān-i inshā'* and *ṣāḥib-dīvān* to Muḥammad (*Ḥadā'iq al-siḥr*, pp. 93–96). Gardīzī gives the earliest hard information about him (p. 75). In 408/1017, when Mas'ūd was appointed governor of Herāt, with Abū Sahl Zauzanī as his *kadkhudā*, Muḥammad was made governor of Gūzganān, with Quhistānī as his *kadkhudā*. He did not stay in Gūzganān indefinitely. At an unknown date he was appointed *'āriḍ* of Maḥmūd's army, and three of Farrukhī's four *qaṣīdas* to him address him variously as *'āriḍ al-jaysh*, *'āriḍ-i lashkar*, *'Amīd-i lashkar-i mir* (pp. 171, 197, 319), and also 'Amīd al-Mulk and Khwāja 'Amīd. In or around 417/1026, he was apparently replaced by Abu'l-Qāsim Kathīr, as appears from a passage in *Āthār al-wuzarā'*. This records a conversation, quoting the *Maqāmāt* of Abū Naṣr Mishkān, dated 419/1028, in which Maḥmūd discusses with Abū Naṣr whether or not he should reinstate Maymandī as vizier (pp. 189–90), and if not, who should be appointed in his place. Abū'l-Qāsim Kathīr, the first name suggested, had been *'āriḍ* for two years, but Maḥmūd was not satisfied with his conduct of his department and rejected him. After several others had been considered, the Sultan's choice fell on Ḥasanak. This passage is puzzling, and the date given may not be correct; if it is, the implication is that Maḥmūd had been managing without a vizier for three years, since the dismissal of Maymandī in 416/1025, and also that Ḥasanak held the vizierate for only two years. Both seem unlikely, and are contradicted by other sources.

However this may be, Quhistānī's tenure of the *Dīvān-i 'ard* would appear to have been fairly short, and Farrukhī's three poems naming him as *'āriḍ* must have been composed during this period. Two of them were for festivals, Naurūz (p. 171) and Mihragān (p. 197). The third (p. 319) is not for a special occasion, but is full of general praise for his great generosity and his patronage of learning and literature, which included the building of *madrasas* (p. 321, 1.7). Towards the end of the poem, in the *ḥasb-i ḥāl* slot, Farrukhī reveals that he had been suffering from fever, otherwise he would have written a longer and more elaborate poem. The last of his four poems to Quhistānī (p. 325), which names him only as 'Khwāja 'Amīd', ends with good wishes for 'Sada [10 Bahman], the joyful 'Īd, and Bahman [21 January–20 February]'. The 'Īd must be 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, on 10 Dhū'l Ḥijja, probably late January–early February 416/1026; if the title given to Quhistānī is an indicator, he was no longer *'āriḍ*.

The final piece of information on Quhistānī's life in Ghazna is in the only mention of him in Bayhaqī's history, in the narrative of the *qawwāl* describing Muḥammad's downfall. After the departure of 'Alī Qarīb and the other grandees, Muḥammad, imprisoned in the fortress of Kuhtīz, was still allowed the company of his servants and musicians. One day he saw a cloud of dust in the distance, and sent to enquire the reason. He was much cheered by the answer: it was the *dabīr* Bu Bakr (Quhistānī), who was travelling by fast camel to Garmsīr, on his way to Iraq and Mecca via Kirmān.

Muḥammad had feared for his life because Abū Sahl Zauzanī was 'thirsting for his blood' (TB 71). Quhistānī arrived safely in Iraq and made a new career for himself in the west, first in Baghdād as a panegyrist of the Caliph al-Qādir and other notables, and then in the service of the Seljuqs. Bākharzī met him in 435/1043, when he was head of the *ishrāf* of Khurāsān, as Ḥamdavī had been some ten years earlier. Bākharzī quotes an Arabic panegyric of his to Muḥammad, which can be dated to 420/1029, as it names the prince as *valī-'ahd*, and also *mawlā Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, with the post-Somnath titles of *Jalāl al-Daula* and *Jamāl al-Milla* (*Dumyat al-qaṣr*, pp. 134–36). Bākharzī also quotes another poem of Quhistānī's, commenting on Mas'ūd's fatness; understandably, he kept well away from Ghazna after Mas'ūd's accession.

The third patron linked with the 'Maḥmūdīyān', Abū Sahl 'Abdullah b. Aḥmad b.Lakshān, the *mamdūḥ* of four poems (pp. 187,248,314,327), was *kadkhudā* to Amīr Yūsuf, who, according to Farrukhī, was devoted to him and greatly valued his advice (p. 242, ll.4–5). Two of these poems (pp. 187, 327) postdate Somnath, as Yūsuf is given the title of '*Aḍud al-Daula*; all four were composed for festivals, Naurūz (twice), 'Īd al-Fiṭr, and Mihragān. Ibn Lakshān is much praised for his learning and secretarial skills; the poems contain a number of literary allusions, and begin with delightful *nasībs*, including one on wine and the vine-harvest, a rare topic in Farrukhī's poetry (p. 314). Bayhaqī mentions Ibn Lakshān once, briefly but with approbation. After the fall of Yūsuf, he found himself in difficulty and his property was confiscated; but he was a highly educated, clever and modest man, and managed to re-establish himself. He was appointed '*āmil* of Bust, his native town, and died there at an unknown date (TB 254). Farrukhī's poems to Quhistānī and Ibn Lakshān, although of considerable literary interest, are of little historical value. This also applies to the five *qaṣīdas* and one *tarjī'-band* (p. 428) addressed to Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī b.Faḍl b.Aḥmad, known as the Khwāja Hajjāj.

Hajjāj came from an interesting family. He was the son of Maḥmūd's first vizier, Abū'l-'Abbas Faḍl b.Aḥmad Isfarā'īnī, who is best known for his attempt to change the language of the chancery from Arabic to Persian. According to *Āthār al-wuzarā'*, Hajjāj wrote poetry in Arabic and his *dīvān* was famous for its erudition and accomplishment (p. 150), but it seems that 'Uqaylī has confused him with his elder brother Abū'l-Qāsim Muḥammad, who died young and whose poetry, and part of an elegy on his death, are quoted by 'Utbī (II pp. 162–63, 164). 'Utbī also speaks highly of Abū'l-Ḥasan Hajjāj's religious and secular learning ('*ilm* and *adab*). In addition, according to 'some historians' ('Uqaylī's words), Isfarā'īnī's daughter was a respected traditionist, some of whose *ḥadīths* were accepted by expert *muhaddithān* (p. 150). Farrukhī, who benefited greatly from Hajjāj's generosity (p. 318, l.22; p. 319, ll.1–4; p. 360, ll.8–12) heaps praise on his justice and beneficence, but says little about his learning, and nothing at all to

suggest that he was a poet. Not much is known about Hajjāj's life. A letter to him from Badī' al-Zamān al-Ḥamadānī has been preserved (*Rasā'il*, no. 112, p. 317), asking for help for someone who wanted to combine the *hajj* with the '*umra;* it addresses him as *al-shaykh al-sayyid*, and was presumably written to him when he was fairly young, as Badī' al-Zamān died in 398–9/1008. It is perhaps worth mentioning that Lane's dictionary gives 'a frequent performer of the pilgrimage to Mecca' as a meaning for 'Hajjāj', and also says that it was used as a proper name; this may be relevant to the subject of the letter. Hajjāj was '*āmil* of Gūzganān during Muḥammad's governorate, and was later '*āmil* of Nasā; Tha'ālibī has preserved a poem by one Abū'l-Qāsim 'Umar b.'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sarakhsī, condoling with 'al-Shaykh Hajjāj b.al-Shaykh Abū'l-'Abbas al-Isfarā'īnī' when the roof of his hall (*dihlīz*) in Nasā collapsed; this was seen as an evil omen (*Tatimma*, vol. 2, p. 44).

After this digression on the 'Maḥmūdīyān' patrons of Farrukhī, in which Hajjāj has been included because his connection with Gūzganān suggests friendship with Muḥammad, it seems appropriate to return to Farrukhī's position at the time of the deposition of Muḥammad. Two lines in '*Ramaḍān raft*' indicate that he was still with the prince at 'Īd al-Fiṭr, watching what appears to have been a ceremonial parade, in which 'he [Muḥammad] is like the moon with an army of stars' (p. 108, ll.14–15). Farrukhī probably did not stay there much longer. It appears from the *qawwāl* 'Abd al-Rahmān's narrative that when the army left for Herāt, the more highly placed members of the prince's entourage, no doubt including Farrukhī, went with it, and only the poorer dependents, the musicians, the *qawwāl*, and the older *nadīms*, whose belongings had been plundered and who had no hope of patronage elsewhere, and also, perhaps, stronger ties of loyalty to the prince, stayed with him. They included one Nāṣir-i Lughavī or Baghavī, who composed a *rubā'ī* lamenting Muḥammad's fate, which is quoted by Bayhaqī and was once wrongly attributed to Farrukhī (TB 75; de Blois 1992 pp. 212–13).

Farrukhī now had to ingratiate himself with the new Sultan, and in the seven poems that address Mas'ūd as sultan he is at great pains to emphasise his own devotion to Mas'ūd and his belief in the legitimacy of Mas'ūd's succession. As virtually all his previous patrons had come from the ranks of the 'Maḥmūdīyān' – the two princes and their *kadkhudā*, the vizier Ḥasanak and the *nadīm* Ḥaṣīrī – he could have been regarded by Mas'ūd as a member of the enemy's camp. Mas'ūd had his own poets; Zaynabī 'Alavī was a particular favourite, Manūchihrī was soon to arrive on the scene, and it is obvious from several of his poems that there was much competition for Mas'ūd's favour, and trouble-making from envious rivals. Mas'ūd was famously generous to poets (TB 131, 274): Farrukhī had written poems to him in his father's lifetime (e.g. pp. 148–51, 394–96), and he seems to have shown kindness to Maḥmūd's favourite poet. According to a poem addressed to him while he was still in Herāt (pp. 154–55) the road to Bust and Herāt is described as being like a spring garden, lined with roses, even though it is

winter), this kindness gave rise to envious comment (p. 154, ll.10–11): 'Great men are envious of that lesser one, because the Khusrau spoke to him twice. The king of Rūm wishes, like me, to lay a *barbut* in front of him'.

Three of the poems to Mas'ūd speak of his campaign in (Persian) Iraq. The first (pp. 143–45) refers to his victories there in general terms, and is perhaps in celebration of his anxiously awaited arrival in Ghazna in June 422/1031. The other two (pp. 145–47, 303–5) have much more to say about the campaign, and lay stress on the small number of troops at Mas'ūd's disposal. The first one can be positively dated to 'Īd al-Fiṭr 422/September 1031 (see Chapter 2). In it, Farrukhī makes lame excuses for Maḥmūd's conduct: he did not wish to humiliate (*khwārī kardan*) his son, but wanted to demonstrate to other kings that Mas'ūd, with inadequate forces, could be victorious anywhere in the world. The second poem describes, in graphic and emotive terms, an unidentified battle between Mas'ūd's heavily outnumbered forces and crack troops from 'the army of 'Irāq and the mountains of Gīlān', probably the army of the Kākūyid 'Alā' al-Daula: it is in this poem, mentioned earlier, that Mas'ūd is said to have had less than 2,000 men. As Farrukhī tells the story, Mas'ūd made a stirring address to his troops, urging them to do their best for their own sakes as well as his: 'It is better to go on with a good name than to return to my father in a different fashion'; he also promised them rich rewards. He then performed heroic deeds, routed the enemy, and rounded off his victory by killing a lion, a favourite pastime. It is impossible to tell what relation this story has to reality, but, like the previous poem, it does seem to reflect, even if indirectly, the feeling voiced by Mas'ūd that he had been unfairly treated by his father (TB 218).

Of the 15 or so poems Farrukhī wrote to Maymandī, at least seven belong to this period. Maymandī was a former patron and friend, and the poems to him give an impression of genuine personal affection, as well as deep gratitude and admiration; Farrukhī may well have felt that Maymandī was his only friend in a hostile world. Congratulating the Vizier on his reinstatement (pp. 305–7), Farrukhī speaks of the general delight at his return, and adds a warning that he has lost none of his old skills and severity (p. 306, 1.21 ff.). Another poem (pp. 157–58), which has already been mentioned because of its autobiographical element, is of considerable historical interest. It contains clear though discreetly worded criticism of Maḥmūd for his dismissal of Maymandī and his failure to realise that things would go wrong without him (p. 158, 1.2 ff.):

> … He listened to mischief-makers and evil arose.
> Nurses/tutors [*dāyagān*] had found hands and tongues and the belly made some blind and some deaf.
> Dimna [the evil jackal], for his belly's sake, did not seek the lion's welfare; inevitably, the lion's child conceived hatred of him.

The evil of evil-speakers overthrew them; he [Maymandī] emerged from that affliction like the moon from the clouds.

He who is dead burns in the fires of hell, and he who is alive wallows in his heart's blood …

Myriads of hearts, sorrowful in Kalinjar [the fortress where Maymandī was imprisoned from 416/1025 to 421/1030] have returned to joy and happiness with the Khwāja.

This passage is an oblique and allegorical depiction of the conspiracy that brought Maymandī down in 416/1025, and the later fate of some of the conspirators. The use of the word *dāyagān* is puzzling but may refer to the involvement of members of the Sultan's family in the plot, including 'Alī Qarīb and Maḥmūd's sister Ḥurra-i Khuttalī. The source for the details of the plot is a series of extracts from the *Maqāmāt* of Abū Naṣr Mishkān, quoted in 'Uqaylī's *Āthār al-wuzarā'*. In one of these passages (pp. 156–57), Maymandī comments on his chief enemies, the Khwārazmshāh Altuntāsh, 'Alī Ḥājib ('Alī Qarīb), Ḥasanak and Abū Bakr Ḥaṣīrī, and describes 'Alī as 'a great *Dimna*, who poisons the minds of others'. The editor of the printed text has emended the '*Dimna*' of the manuscript to *dāhiya* (danger, calamity), but apart from the fact that the sentence seems to require a personal subject, the use of the word '*Dimna*' by Farrukhī suggests that Maymandī's comment may have become public knowledge, and he is deliberately quoting it. The 'lion's child' is obviously Mas'ūd, and the vengeance mentioned must be the imprisonment of 'Alī Qarīb and his brother and the execution of Ḥasanak. Another poem to Maymandī also seems to refer to the downfall of 'Alī Qarīb, and suggests that Farrukhī was in Herāt when it took place (p. 309, ll.18 ff.): 'At night punishment struck the ill-wisher; I knew the night was pregnant. It dug a pit and the enemy did not believe that his dwelling would be in that house. God accomplished these matters'.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the poems of the second vizierate is one (pp. 158–60) that has no mention of a date, though one or two lines give the impression that it was written in early spring. Judging from the contents, it may be the first poem that Farrukhī addressed to Maymandī after his reinstatement. The erotic *nasīb*, usually a conventional, though in Farrukhī's poetry often a very varied and charming, opening to a poem, has more personal application than is usual. It is addressed to a Turkish beloved, from whom the lover has been separated for six years, an obvious reference to the period of Maymandī's imprisonment, and with whom he longs to be reunited, whatever the cost and difficulties. Farrukhī, now speaking in his own voice, expresses the hope that God will forgive sinners, more especially his own sin, 'since, after God, I have always been in the service of the king's minister [*dastūr-i malik*], Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad' (p. 159, ll.7–8).

This looks like a veiled apology for his desertion of Maymandī for Ḥasanak, with an assurance of his renewed allegiance and willingness to

accept any unpleasant consequences, implying that he may not have been certain of his reception. The *madīḥ* is replaced by a lengthy and graphic description, too long to quote in full, of the wretched state of the realm because of Maḥmūd's absence: the kingdom of the world was like a house whose doors and walls had collapsed, the army was in tumult, and the treasury was ruined. No revenue was coming in, the money supply had dried up, enemies and evil talk were everywhere. The return of Maymandī will restore prosperity, and the offenders will be punished (a topic that comes up in several other poems):

> Although Khurāsān is today in ruins, although not many people are left in it, next year, through the fortune and *barakat* of the *Khwāja*, it will be like a garden in the month of Azar [March].
> The judgment and vision of the *Khwāja* are like spring blossom; when these two are joined, the rose and the rose-garden both smile.
> Justice has come, security has come, and the subjects have been rescued from the claws of thieving and treacherous wolves.
> The teeth of all of them have been blunted, the grip of all of them has slackened; they have become like hyenas searching for carrion.
> For six years they enjoyed ease and their hearts' desire; today they must chew the cud like camels.
>
> (ll.16–21)

The next four lines have more to this effect: gluttony and drunkenness have driven the sense from the heads of these unnamed enemies (perhaps a reference to the very recent downfall of Aryārūq in February of this year), and now they are faced with the consequences. The poem ends with warm good wishes for a successful and fortunate tenure of office. It is perhaps worth noting that Farrukhī used very similar language in praising Ḥasanak for his reforming activities in Sīstān, in a poem (pp. 333–35) quoted earlier in this chapter; he even used the same word, *barakat*, apropos of the good effects of Ḥasanak's work (p. 334, 1.20).

Maymandī's second vizierate lasted less than two years; he died in Herāt at the beginning of Ṣafar 424/January 1033 (TB 365). This makes it easier to suggest dates for Farrukhī's poems to him, and a tentative chronology has been constructed as follows, on the assumption that pp. 158–60 is the earliest. A poem for Naurūz (pp. 305–7), the rubric of which, not always a reliable source, describes it as being 'on the appointment to the vizierate [*vizārat yāftan*] of *Khwāja* Aḥmad b.Ḥasan Maymandī after a six-year removal from office', is probably the next in date. Evidently composed soon after Maymandī's reinstatement, it is a shorter and watered-down version of the previous poem, without the personal touches; it expresses the general pleasure at the return of Maymandī, which is equated with the coming of spring: 'the wind of Naurūz has replaced the wind of autumn' (p. 306, 1.9).

Maymandī is worthy of his high place, and his return has been much longed for, especially by the great men of Khurāsān (1.11). The ominous passage of warning, mentioned earlier, is perhaps the most interesting part of the poem. The next two poems are autumnal, and were composed for immediately following days, the last day of Ramaḍān, which coincided with Mihragān, and ʿĪd al-Fiṭr (pp. 155–57, 158–60). The Mihragān poem is not concerned with religion or affairs of state, but with the festival's significance as a magnet for poets and the patronage of poetry, and also the patron's standing both as a statesman and a lover of poetry. The second poem (pp. 158–60) has already been discussed at length, but the *nasīb*, a cheerful and irreverent comment on the delights of wine-drinking now that Ramaḍān is over, is noteworthy. The Mihragān poem is of interest because there is no equivalent poem on this occasion addressed to Masʿūd, as there is for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr (pp. 145–47); it would appear that Farrukhī came to this festival as Maymandī's poet, not Masʿūd's, and this may explain the absence of his name among the poets cited by Bayhaqī as having received rich rewards on this occasion (TB 273–74).

Of the remaining three poems (others addressed to Maymandī may belong to this period, but there is no conclusive evidence for this), one was written for Sada, probably in late January 423/1032 (Sada took place on 10 Bahman, roughly approximating to 31 January). In the previous year, Maymandī had been fully occupied at this time with the ceremonies of his reinstatement, and Bayhaqī does not mention any Sada celebrations, though it was a favourite festival with Masʿūd. The Sada poem (pp. 49–52) has a long *nasīb* (19 *bayts*) describing the beauties of fire and its changing shapes, but otherwise consists of a series of vague and gnomic observations (the text is doubtful in several places) with no historical content; it does, however, mention the reinstatement of Maymandī (p. 52, 1.5). The other two poems (pp. 203–4, 308–10) were both composed for Naurūz. The first one, which has the rare rhyme -*āz*, can almost certainly be dated to 423/1032, as it celebrates conquests by Masʿūd in Makrān, Kirmān, Rayy, Qazvīn, Sāveh and Ahwāz, and anticipates further conquests in Fārs, the Arabian peninsula, Syria and Hijāz. The second poem is more problematic; it contains the passage about the enemy falling into the pit he has dug (p. 309, ll.15 ff.), quoted above, and may belong to the year 422/1031.

The six poems addressed to Maymandī's son or sons (pp. 17, 25, 43, 160, 162, 313), all include the information that the *mamdūḥ's* father is a vizier, but are very economical with his name and titles, and it is not entirely clear whether one son or two is in question. Three poems (pp. 17, 25, 160) name the *mamdūḥ* as ʿAbd al-Razzāq, Maymandī's eldest son, according to Bayhaqī. Two (pp. 160, 313) give him the *kunya* of Abū'l-Fatḥ; one (p. 25) is addressed to 'Mīr Abū Faḍl, son of the *Sayyid al-wuzarā*", and may perhaps be to another son. Yet another (p. 162) is addressed to '*Jalīl khwāja-i āfāq-i Aḥmad*' without any other name; this was probably ʿAbd al-Razzāq, as in two other poems (pp 17, 160) the honorific 'Jalīl' is attached to his name.

Bayhaqī mentions him several times, with the title of *'Khwāja* 'Amīd' (pp. 64, 186). At the time of his father's release from Kalinjar, he was imprisoned in the fortress of Nandāna, some 200 miles from Multān, and, on the orders of Mas'ūd, was released and reunited with Maymandī, whom he accompanied to Balkh (TB 149). It was he who told Bayhaqī about Abū Sahl Zauzanī's successful attempt to dissuade Maymandī from interceding with Mas'ūd on Ḥasanak's behalf (TB 186).

'Abd al-Razzāq became a friend and boon-companion of Mas'ūd, whom he entertained in style at Maymand in Rabī' II-Jumāda I 428/January–February 1037 (TB 519), and he was with the Sultan at the battle of Dandānqān in Ramaḍān 431/May 1040. He was later vizier to Mas'ūd's son and successor Maudūd; he survived the period of instability that followed Maudūd's death, and was still alive and living in Multān in 450/1058–9 (TB 64, 157). Farrukhī's poems to him are pleasant but unremarkable, composed for various festivals ('Īd al-Fiṭr, Mihragān, Sada), and they contain virtually no historical information. With the possible exception of p. 25, they were probably written after 'Abd al-Razzāq's release from prison, during the two years of Maymandī's second vizierate. An 'Īd al-Fiṭr poem (p. 162) which ends with good wishes for the autumn, the 'Īd and the departure of Ramaḍān, must have been composed for Shawwāl 422/September 1031, like the poem to Maymandī for the same occasion, likewise the poem for Sada (p. 160). This is the most notable of the six, with a very engaging *nasīb*, a dialogue between the poet and the violets and cypresses in the garden. It ends with an injunction to build a great fire for the night of Sada; this is the custom and it should not be neglected (p. 161, 1.21). This poem could hardly be more different from the poem for the same occasion that Farrukhī composed for his father.

After the period of Maymandī's second vizierate no more is known of Farrukhī. In spite of his words to Maymandī, quoted earlier in this chapter, court poets did not usually retire; it seems that he must have fallen victim to some illness or other misfortune. References to him in the works of later writers give no hint of what became of him after his chief patrons were gone, and Labībī's lines are the only clue. It is a mystery that cannot be solved.

4

MU'IZZĪ

Biography to 485/1092, background, personality

Mu'izzī's poetry resembles Farrukhī's in several ways; he followed the tradition of panegyric established by 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī, admiring them, quoting them, and occasionally imitating them without acknowledgement, as his own poetry was to be imitated by Sanā'ī and others. His ethnic origin, background and personality, however, were very different from Farrukhī's. He was Persian by birth, a Khurāsānī from Nīshāpūr, born *c.*440/1048–9, the son of a professional poet and royal panegyrist, 'Abd al-Malik Burhānī Nīshāpūrī. According to the account of Mu'izzī's early life that he gave to Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī in 510/1116–7 (CM 46–49), Burhānī was *Amīr al-shu'arā'* to Alp Arslān, the second Seljuq sultan (455–65/1063–72), and had taken his *laqab* from the title *Burhān amīr al-mu'minīn* granted to Alp Arslān by the Caliph al-Qā'im, just as Mu'izzī, in his turn, was to take his own *laqab* from the title *Mu'izz al-Dīn* granted by the same caliph to Alp Arslān's son and successor Malikshāh (465–85/1072–92). Burhānī died in Qazvīn very early in Malikshāh's reign; in a famous line of verse quoted by Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī and by 'Aufī (p. 299) he states that he is dying and commends his son to Malikshāh as a worthy successor. There has been some doubt about the authorship of this line, as a lacuna and some confusion in 'Aufī's text associates it with the work of another writer, Adīb Mukhtār Zauzanī, a patron of both Burhānī and Mu'izzī; but Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī plainly took Burhānī to be the author.

A number of Mu'izzī's poems are dedicated to patrons of his father, and he makes much play, as will be seen, with his claim to be the rightful heir to his father's fame and position: 'the nightingale's child' (*Dīvān* pp. 634–6/575–7). It is, unfortunately, impossible to judge how far Mu'izzī's praise of his father is justified, because little of Burhānī's work has survived, and the virtual absence of references to him in anthologies and works of literary criticism suggests that his *dīvān* disappeared at an early stage. Rāduyānī, who was more or less contemporary with Mu'izzī, quotes Burhānī once in *Tarjumān al-balāgha*, but in the following two centuries his name seems to have been forgotten; for example, he is not mentioned in Rashīd Vatvāt's *Ḥadā'iq al-siḥr*, or in Shams-i Qays's *al-Mu'jam*, both of which contain numerous references to Mu'izzī. Mu'izzī himself quotes his father's poetry only once, in

a *qaṣīda* to Mu'in al-Mulk Abū'l-Qāsim 'Alī b.Sa'īd, who was for many years deputy to Fakhr al-Mulk b.Niẓām al-Mulk and his son Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad when they held the vizierate under Sanjar (?495–500/?1102–7 and 500–11/1107–17 respectively). 'A *dū-bayt* of Khwāja Burhānī suits you, for you are the proof [*burhān*] of every *dū-bayt*.' The *dū-bayt* in question assures the patron that his name and lineage will last till the day of judgment, and is strongly religious in flavour, with two quotations from the Qur'ān (pp. 612–4/557–9). Another *dū-bayt*, in praise of a successful war-leader, perhaps Alp Arslān, is quoted by Rāduyānī as an example of a *muqatta'* (a short poem), and he comments on its verbal and literal dexterity (pp. 110–13, 256–57). Thirdly, Iqbāl, in the preface to his pioneering edition of Mu'izzī's *dīvān* (pp. 2–4), quotes three lines, whether complete in themselves or part of a longer poem, from a manuscript literary miscellany (*jung*) in his possession, addressing the patron in conventional terms, but suggesting that the poet is in some distress of body or mind:

> O pupil of the eye, don't leave our sight, and, O dear life, don't leave our breast.
> O precious soul, don't depart from our sick body, and, O shadow of mercy, don't leave our head.
> O picture of the imagination [*naqsh-i khiyāl*], writing of the soul [*khatt-i jān*], delight of the heart, don't leave the table of our vision [*lauh-i sawād-i basar-i mā*].

These three small poems give an impression of an interesting poetic personality and considerable technical skill; this is confirmed by the longest and most notable, though very dissimilar, surviving example of Burhānī's poetry, the 14-line *nasīb* of a lost *qaṣīda*, which, exceptionally, is preserved in the fourteenth-century anthologist Jājarmī's *Mu'nis al-aḥrār* (Jājarmī II p. 481; Mu'in vol. I p. 245). The last line of this poem suggests that it was addressed to Dhū'l-Sa'ādat Fakhr al-Ma'ālī Abū 'Alī Sharafshāh Ja'farī, *rā'īs* of Qazvīn, and appointed *wāli* of the city by the Seljuqs; he was a descendant of Ja'far b.Abī Ṭālib, known as '*Ja'far al-tayyār*' because the Prophet dreamt that he flew to Paradise (Mottahedeh pp. 34–35, 38–39): 'Let me speak of a Shāh, Ja'farī in lineage, a lord of generosity and beneficence'.

Mu'izzī addressed three *qaṣīdas* to this Sharafshāh, in which he refers to his Ja'farī ancestry and to the legend about Ja'far, his patronage of Burhānī and to Burhānī's death in Qazvīn (pp.74–6/74–5, 128–30/127–9, 172–3/173–4). Sharafshāh was extremely rich, and if he is to be identified with the Abū 'Alī Ja'farī who, according to Ḥamdallāh Mustaufī Qazvīnī, repaired the city walls of Qazvīn in 411/1020 (*Nuzhat al-Qulūb* p. 63), he must have been a very old man when Mu'izzī addressed poems to him some 50 years later. The tone of Burhānī's *nasīb*, lively, informal and, superficially at least, irreverent, suggests that the poem may have been written when Sharafshāh was

considerably younger. Burhānī was 56 when he died in 465–1072/3 (Mu'izzī p. 75), and could have enjoyed Sharafshāh's patronage over a number of years. Mu'izzī's imitation of his father's poem implies that it was well-known and had been well received by Sharafshāh.

Burhānī's poem is remarkable because it is an example of so-called *qalandarī* poetry, many years before Sanā'ī introduced the genre into Persian poetry (Mu'in vol. I pp. 240–52):

> Every day that I'm in the tavern [*kharābāt*] I'm as happy as Moses talking to God [*dar munājāt*].
> The whole of every day I spend in drunkenness is blessed for me.
> It's better for me to be senseless [*bī-khwīshtan*] than to make a show of Qur'ān reading and acts of devotion [*tā'āt*].
> When I'm free of the bond of wisdom, I'm at rest from the threat of pious works [*'abādat*] …
> Sometimes I say 'Cupbearer, fill the cup'; sometimes I say 'Musician, sing a lovesong'.
> … My father made a *waqf* of my wine-jar; my mother prepared me for the tavern.
> I'm a free man, I don't care, I'll be proud to be among the drunkards [*qalāshān*].
> Why do I talk tavern-keepers' nonsense? I don't know anything but jokes and nonsense [*khurāfāt*].

Burhānī, according to 'Aufī, discussing the late Seljuq poet Sandalī (p. 478; de Blois 1992 p. 534), seems to have been well-known for jokes (*latā'if*), and this may be all there is to the poem. A very tentative suggestion, however, is that it may reflect the views of the Malāmatīyya, a movement associated with Ṣūfīsm which appeared in Khurāsān in the third/ninth century; its adherents rejected any outward show of religious devotion, including prayer and good works, and, in reaction against what they saw as the hypocrisy present in ostentatious piety, sometimes adopted deliberately anti-social behaviour (EI^2 "Malāmatīyya"; de Bruijn 1983, pp. 4–5, 1997 pp. 71–76). The Nīshāpūrī shaykh Hamdūn al-Qassār (d. 271/884) had been a major figure in this movement (EI^2, EIr), and Malāmatīs were still active in Nīshāpūr in the fifth/eleventh century. Burhānī may have fallen under their influence; but he may also have been making fun of them.

Mu'izzī's version of Burhānī's *nasīb* (pp.128–9/127–8) begins much in the same vein, echoing his father's phraseology and praise of the joys of drunkenness.

> If the house of the hypocrites [*libāsātīyān*] is the tavern, for me there is hypocrisy among the tavern-haunters [*kharābātīyān*].
> In the midst of the city all the lovers have got drunk; perhaps my idol is in the tavern today.

Don't pursue asceticism [*zuhd*]; get drunk, haunt taverns; the whole fabric of life is drunkenness.
Bring Pharaoh's cup, put it into my hand; it is the day of Moses's promise and the place of assembly [*mīqāt*].

He then moves on to his principal theme, the claims of love and total devotion to the beloved, and the virtual impossibility of putting them into words.

I shan't throw away my shield through wine-drinking, for I'm proud to be in the lists of love.
Wherever there is a refuge for the people of love, it is no place for the fine points of accounts [*nukta-i tūmār*], it is the place for nonsense [*tāmāt*].
Between the lover and beloved there is that meaning which words cannot express.
I am the man who prostrates himself before love; in this prostration I have miraculous powers [*karāmāt*].
Every song in which the lover asks for love is to me like the seven *Mathānī* [the seven long chapters of the Qur'ān] and like prayers [*tahīyāt*].

The language of these poems of Burhānī and Mu'izzī, with its antinomian elements and overtones of Ṣūfīsm, was to become familiar in the mystical poetry of the next two centuries, in which the 'tavern' became a metaphor for the house of the Ṣūfī shaykh, but it was most unusual at this period, and none of Mu'izzī's other poems contain anything similar or any hint of Ṣūfīsm ('Aṭṭār p. 104; de Bruijn 1997 pp. 71–76). Wine-making and the legends connected with it, the pleasures of wine-drinking, the welcome to 'Īd al-Fiṭr as a release from the prohibition of wine during Ramaḍān, were frequent topics in Ghaznavid poetry, and probably in Sāmānid poetry too, if Rūdakī's famous *mādar-i may qaṣīda* is typical: but the wine-drinking was always in a courtly setting, a *majlis* or a garden, not in a town tavern among low company. Burhānī's *nasīb* was reproduced almost *verbatim* by Sanā'ī, with the omission of three lines, as the first of a series of four short *qalandarī* poems, and for this reason and because of the style of the poem, it has sometimes been thought that Jājarmī's attribution was wrong and that Sanā'ī is the real author; but Mu'izzī's evident references to the poem in his own *qaṣīda* appear to confirm its authenticity (Mu'in 1985 pp. 266–68).

The only source for Mu'izzī's early life, apart from the brief passages of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* that occur in some of his poems, especially those to his father's patrons, is his own lively, detailed account of how he became established as Malikshāh's chief poet, which has been preserved in *Chahār Maqāla*. Malikshāh had accepted him as his father's rightful successor and Burhānī's salary and allowances (*jāmagī u ijrā*) had nominally been transferred to him,

but the new sultan, only eighteen when his father was assassinated, and deeply involved in fighting off rival claimants to his throne, apparently forgot his poet; after a year Mu‘izzī had received no payment, was deep in debt and had been unable to obtain access to Malikshāh. He appealed for help to Burhānī's only surviving royal patron, the Kākūyid Amīr ‘Alā’ al-Daula ‘Alī b.Farāmurz, who was a close friend and boon companion (*nadīm-i khāss*) of Malikshāh, and became his uncle by marriage, wedding Chaghrī Beg's daughter, the widow of the Caliph al-Qā’im, in 469/1076–7. ‘Alā’ al-Daula willingly accepted what he recognised as an obligation, and treated Mu‘izzī with a generosity and kindness of which the poet speaks with warm appreciation and gratitude both in *Chahār Maqāla* and in the three poems addressed to ‘Alā’ al-Daula (pp. 120–2/120–1, 510–11/472–3, 522–3/482–3). He gave Mu‘izzī immediate financial assistance, instructed him to be at court when the Sultan came out to look for the new moon of Ramaḍān, and then called on Mu‘izzī to celebrate the occasion with a couple of impromptu *rubā’īs*. Malikshāh rewarded Mu‘izzī with a horse and a thousand dinars, and ‘Alā’ al-Daula promised to take immediate practical steps to see that the salary was paid: ‘Tomorrow I will sit on the Minister's skirt until he writes a draft for his salary on Ispahān, and orders his allowances to be paid out of the treasury’. Malikshāh, commenting that no one but ‘Alā’ al-Daula would dare to do this, granted Mu‘izzī his *laqab* and title of *amīr al-shu’arā’*, and at the end of Ramaḍān, through the agency of ‘Alā’ al-Daula, Mu‘izzī was appointed as one of the Sultan's *nadīms* (CM 48/49).

Although several of Burhānī's patrons, as will be seen, were associated with Niẓām al-Mulk or related to him by marriage, Mu‘izzī says that he had no hope of assistance from the Vizier: ‘for that great Minister [*khwāja-i buzūrg*] had no opinion of poetry because he had no skill in it; nor did he pay attention to anyone except religious teachers and mystics [*a’imma u mutasawwifa*]’. ‘Alā’ al-Daula was apparently on good terms with both Niẓām al-Mulk and the Sultan (the Shāh rejoices in you, the Vizier is pleased with you [*shadkān … shadmān*], p. 523, l.12251). Mu‘izzī seems to lay some emphasis on his Shiism. In all the poems he wrote to ‘Alā’ al-Daula he compares his patron, whose personal name was ‘Alī, to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, sometimes at considerable length, and in one poem he implies that ‘Alā’ al-Daula acted as patron to the ‘Alids: His devotion to the Lord of the world (i.e. Malikshāh) is like that of the Lord of Siffīn to the Lord of the *mi’rāj*: ‘ … The whole party [*shī’at*] of Haydar is the lover [*‘āshiq*] of your way [*rasm*], the whole family of Yāsīn [the Prophet] is grateful for your generosity’ (p. 510, ll.11980–84/p. 472). ‘Alā’ al-Daula was not merely a courtier; as the ruler of Yazd and Abarqūh he appears to have taken his duties seriously. According to Afdal al-Dīn Kirmānī (p. 102), he tried to attract eminent men from Khurāsān and Iraq to Yazd, and his wife Arslān Khātūn was noted for her charitable works there (Bosworth 1970 pp. 86, 92). It is difficult to explain a passage in one of Mu‘izzī's poems to him, in which he is described as ‘the

lord of Māzandarān; Hijāz is envious of the country of Sārī [one of the chief cities of Māzandarān] because it has a ruler like the Amīr' (p. 122, ll. 2699–2700/p. 121, ll. 9–10). There is no other evidence that 'Alā' al-Daula had ever held any position of authority in Māzandarān, which was probably at this time under Bāvandīd rule, and there may be some textual confusion here. 'Alā' al-Daula's well-known relationship with Chaghrī Beg is twice mentioned (pp. 121, 522), and the connection with the Seljuq royal family continued into the next generation; his son and successor Garshāsp married a daughter of Malikshāh, the sister of Sultans Muḥammad and Sanjar, and was a fervent partisan of Sanjar.

The most striking of Mu'izzī's three *qaṣīda*s to 'Alā' al-Daula is an elaborate poem that reads as an expression of thanks for his intervention on the poet's behalf (pp. 522–3/482–3). The *nasīb* is a panegyric addressed to the Amīr's sword, praising its beauty and power, which by a natural transition develops into praise of the Amīr himself. He is compared with several *Shāhnāma* heroes, including Rostam, Siyāvash and Esfandiyār, which may hint at a family attachment to ancient Iran and Iranian traditions (his father Farāmurz and his son Garshāsp were both named after Shāhnāma characters), and also, rather surprisingly, to Afrāsīyāb, perhaps in deference to his Seljuq relatives who claimed descent from Afrāsīyāb. There is a compliment to his grandfather, the famous 'Alā' al-Daula Muḥammad b. Dushmanzīyār who founded the Kākūyid dynasty, and the patron is praised for his skill in battle and in hunting. The most interesting aspect of the poem, however, is its autobiographical element. Mu'izzī makes much of his own wretchedness and helplessness after Burhānī's death, and also of his poetic talent and justifiable claim to recognition.

> The Khusrau of the age [*i.e.* Malikshāh] drew me up to heaven.
> He gave me the *laqab* of Mu'izzī, and listened to my poetry when he saw my tongue scattering jewels in panegyric.
> Amīr, I am my father's deputy in your service, *al-hadd fi'l-shamā'il wa'l-hamd fi'l-lisān* [with the utmost talent and praise on the tongue].
> Although the rose-garden of poetry is bereft of the nightingale, listen to the song of the nightingale's child from the rose-garden.
> The carpet of the Sayf [al-Daula] was auspicious for Mutanabbī, as Chaghāniyān was for Ḥakīm Daqīqī.
> Your carpet is the more auspicious for me, because I have obtained from you happiness, honour and eternal life.
> (p. 523, ll. 12256–61/pp. 482–83)

The most influential of Burhānī's other patrons, and potentially the most useful to Mu'izzī, was Kamāl al-Daula Abū Ridā Faḍl Allāh b.Muḥammad, the head of Malikshāh's *dīvān-i inshā' u ṭughrā* (the Ghaznavid *dīvān-i*

rasā'il), who, together with the head of the *dīvān-i istīfā'*, Sharaf al-Mulk Abū Sa'd Muḥammad b.Manṣūr, later a patron of Mu'izzī, was one of the two most trusted and reliable associates and allies of Niẓām al-Mulk. He came from a family noted for their Arabic learning. His grandfather Qādī Aḥmad b.Muḥammad, originally from Qā'īn in Quhistān (according to the *nisba* al-Qā'inī given to him by Bākharzī), and his father, Shaykh Abū Naṣr al-Mutāh or Massāh, both wrote poetry, and Bākharzī has preserved a short dialogue in verse between them (Bākharzī 1930 pp. 290–91). He says the *rā'īs* Abū Naṣr was one of the most notable men of his age and quotes several passages from his poetic *dīvān*, including a number of short *khamrīyyas* and the *nasīb* of a *qaṣīda*. The most remarkable member of the family was Kamāl al-Daula's son Sayyid al-Ru'asā' Mu'in al-Mulk Abū'l-Maḥāsin Muḥammad, who acted as his father's deputy. He was one of the outstanding secretaries of the age; Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī in his chapter on secretaries (CM p. 14) recommends his letters for study as models of composition. Bākharzī, who met him in Nīshāpūr, suggests that he wore his learning lightly, and was much impressed by his charm and brilliance (pp. 291–92). He was a *nadīm* and very close friend of Malikshāh, was married to a daughter of Niẓām al-Mulk, and with such strong connections in both the *dargāh* and the *dīvān* he appeared to be in an almost impregnable professional and social position.

The patronage of this family thus brought Mu'izzī into close contact with the higher bureaucracy as well as the court, and was probably responsible for his introduction to the *mustaufī* Sharaf al-Mulk and to Niẓām al-Mulk and his family, among many others. Mu'izzī addressed three *qaṣīda*s to Kamāl al-Daula (pp. 33–4/42–3, 265–7/259–61, 630–2/572–3), the first and third of which mention his patronage of Burhānī; the second contains a passage of praise of Sayyid al-Ru'asā' which implies that he, as well as 'Alā' al-Daula, played a part in introducing Mu'izzī to the Sultan (p. 266, ll.6426 ff.). The third poem (pp. 630–32) is very much on the pattern of the poem to 'Alā' al-Daula already quoted (pp. 522 ff./482–83); it also begins with an elaborate *nasīb*, this time to the *mamdūḥ*'s pen, appropriately for the holder of a high civil office. As in the poem to 'Alā' al-Daula, Mu'izzī ends with a fairly lengthy passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, emphasising his own insignificance ('I am like a gnat [*pasha*] wandering on the bank of the Oxus'), but claiming his right to patronage as the deputy of Burhānī, his buried father (*pidar-i madfūn* pp. 631–32, ll.14602 ff.). He praises Kamāl al-Daula's judgment of poetry: 'You know better than any moneychanger or assayer in this world what the business of a poet is … Ledgers and account-books are not appropriate when poetry is being weighed'.

Although Kamāl al-Daula's sponsorship was both necessary and welcome to Mu'izzī at the outset of his career and was gratefully received, it was the patronage of Sayyid al-Ru'asā' that was of major importance, and this is reflected in the number of poems (13) addressed to him over a period of

some 10 or 11 years. These poems are notable for their subtleties of word-play, assonance, and range of vocabulary, calculated to appeal to a patron who, though primarily an Arabic scholar of distinction, seems also to have been expert in Persian poetry, and may have taught Malikshāh to write verse in Persian; Bundārī (p. 59) offers a translation of a *bayt* by the Sultan to Sayyid al-Ru'asā', written in his own handwriting in Persian, bemoaning his absence. Mu'izzī refers more than once to Sayyid al-Ru'asā's friendship and influence with Malikshāh. He is described as 'the keeper of the Shāh's secrets [*rāz-dār-i shāh*]', 1.9965), and as a major player in Mu'izzī's career: 'The Sovereign has given me the *imārat al-shu'arā'*, with a thousand [*sic*] fine robes, through your good offices' (p. 17/30). In another poem (p. 119/119), Mu'izzī is apparently celebrating the signs of rank, the pavilion and drum which, with a banner, horses and retinue, were bestowed on Sayyid al-Ru'asā' by Malikshāh (IA X pp. 84–85). 'I found a pavilion which was given to my lord by the Shāh who is high-starred, a conqueror of kingdoms. Wherever the drum of the court of Mu'in al-Mulk is, terror of the drum seizes the enemy.' None of the poems to Sayyid al-Ru'asā' contains any references to historical events, and only one or two appear to have been written for a specific occasion, so it is impossible to date them; their interest lies not in their historical value but in their literary qualities and the light they throw on Mu'izzī's life and relations with his patron. The very few references to Mihragān and Naurūz and the great Islamic festivals, which are so often the occasion of poems to Malikshāh, Sanjar and other major patrons, may indicate that the poems to Sayyid al-Ru'asā' were composed for private, not public, gatherings, and the frequent personal details perhaps provide some confirmation of this. There is much lavish praise of the patron's accomplishments and virtues, especially the generosity he evidently showed to Mu'izzī, for which the poet often expresses deep gratitude; he makes it clear, however, as he does in poems to other patrons, that he considered he was giving value for money, as a fine poet whose works would be remembered and would preserve his patron's name.

> I thank you in good verse for your beneficence.
> Although the beneficence lasts, the thanks last longer [*ba shi'r-i nīk hamī shukr-i ni'mat-i tū konam, agar chi ni'mat baqīst shukr baqītar*].
> (p. 265, 1. 6395)

> My *qaṣīdas* in praise of you are studded with rubies and incomparable pearls.
> (p. 19, 1. 316/p. 31, l. 19)

> My poem is pure gold, and of a good standard; the time you bestow on it shows its standard.

You chose me from the poets of the age; I too choose you for my allegiance.
Tell your intimates and *nadīms* to give me a lodging worthy of you.
(p. 423, ll. 9977 ff./p. 396)

Nearly all these poems begin with a conventional erotic *nasīb.* The most noteworthy is a Mihragān poem (p. 608/554), in which the poet compares his separation from his beloved and the grief he feels to the cold wind and rainy weather of autumn; this is an unusually low-key topic for Mihragān, the festival which was generally a cheerful occasion in spite of the coming of autumn and the anticipation of winter. A poem that begins with an erotic *nasīb* (p. 262/257), later introduces another standard topic of Arabic–Persian poetry, the poet's night journey to the patron's house through a fearful desert, with only the stars to guide him.

There were obvious dangers for Sayyid al-Ru'asā' in his exposed and dazzling position, and it appears from one of Mu‘izzī's poems to him that he successfully defeated a plot by unidentified enemies (p. 399, ll. 9425 ff./p. 373).

Your enemies have gone to war, riding the horse of malice and fanaticism [*ta'assub*] …
Although they engaged in treachery with the venom of snakes you have bruised all their heads like the heads of snakes.
Although they lit the fire of malice in secrecy, they burnt in secrecy on that fire.
Although they nourished the tree of enmity, no fruit came from that tree but misery.
Although they dug a pit of disaster for you, now they have fallen into the pit, wretched and despised.
… they have all risen from the pit and gone to the gallows [*bar sar-i dār*] …
Be grateful that God listens to you with favour, and thankful that the enemy is prey in your hands.

Any hint of warning in this seems to have been ignored, and Sayyid al-Ru'asā' brought about his own downfall. In Shawwāl 476/early 1084 he alleged to Malikshāh that Niẓām al-Mulk and his associates were misappropriating enormous sums from the revenues, and he offered to extract a million dinars from them if the Sultan would give him a free hand. Malikshāh was apparently inclined to favour this proposal; but when Niẓām al-Mulk heard of it, he drew up his many thousands of *ghulāms* in battle array, invited the Sultan to inspect them and assured him that the money in question had been spent on this private army for the defence of the realm, and on charitable and public works. Malikshāh thought it wise to give way; Sayyid al-Ru'asā' was arrested, blinded, and sent to the fortress of Sāveh. It

seems unlikely that he survived for very long; Ibn al-Athīr says that he was killed (*qutila*), and the word used for blinding (*samala*) suggests that it was done with great brutality (IA X pp. 84–85; Bundārī 1889 p. 60; *Mir'āt* pp. 224–25). When Kamāl al-Daula, who seems to have been unaware of his son's plot, heard the news, he appealed for help to Niẓām al-Mulk, and saved his own life at the cost of 200,000 dinars (300,000, according to Bundārī) and resignation from his office, which was given to Niẓām al-Mulk's son Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. No more is known of the family.

This harsh conclusion to a professional and family alliance of long-standing was the outcome of a complex situation. Sayyid al-Ru'asā' was a leading member of a group of clever and ambitious younger men who resented the continuing domination of the elderly Vizier and his large and voracious family. Malikshāh himself, for similar reasons, was likely to be sympathetic to this group. He had been on the throne for some 12 years, had conducted several successful military campaigns and was no longer inclined to accept the tutelage of Niẓām al-Mulk without question. Another member of the group was 'Amīd al-Mulk Jamshīd b.Bahmanyār, vizier to the *ghulām* governor of Fārs and Khūzistān, Najm al-Dīn Khumārtigīn. Two years previously, in 474/1081, he had been accused of attempting to poison Niẓām al-Mulk. He denied the accusation, saying that it was a plot designed to estrange him from the Sultan; Malikshāh believed him, but gave way under pressure from Niẓām al-Mulk, and Ibn Bahmanyār was blinded (Ibn al-Jauzī VIII p. 323; Bundārī 1889 p. 60). A factor that probably contributed to Ibn Bahmanyār's plot, if it had really existed, and to Niẓām al-Mulk's reaction to it, was the bitter enmity between Khumārtigīn and the vizier. After the disappearance from the scene of Sayyid al-Ru'asā' and Ibn Bahmanyār, the leadership of the anti-Niẓām al-Mulk faction was taken up by Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im Marzbān Fārsī, of whom more will be said later. He had learnt by experience, according to Bundārī, and was careful to keep on good terms with Niẓām al-Mulk while intriguing against him in secret.

These three men were all Mu'izzī's patrons. He wrote four poems to Tāj al-Mulk, of very high quality, but only one to Ibn Bahmanyār (pp. 29–31/40–1). He names himself in it as 'Mu'izzī son of Burhānī', which may imply, though there is no other evidence, that Ibn Bahmanyār had been a patron of Burhānī. There are a couple of topical references, the first to the patron's governorship of Iṣfahān:

> The lord of all kings Mu'izz al-Dīn wa'l-Dunya [i.e. Malikshāh] chose him from the notables for his generosity and high ability.
> Through him Iṣfahān has become as joyful as the garden is through the *farr* of Farvardīn; now dates have no thorns and thorns have dates.
> Not every *valī* is like him, open-handed and just in heart.
> (p. 30, ll. 564–66)

There is also a mysterious reference to 'the Sultan's physician [*hakīm-i sultān*]', whose rightful fortune [*jawāz-i bakht*] will be higher than the Calf and Gemini when he appears before Ibn Bahmanyār (l.573). But much the most interesting aspect of this poem is that the *nasīb* is a very close and deliberate imitation of the *nasīb* of the first *qaṣīda* in Farrukhī's *dīvān*, addressed to Maḥmūd of Ghazna, which is a lyrical description of a shower cloud and the changing colours and shapes it brings to the sky. Farrukhī's *qaṣīda* begins: '*bar āmad nīlgūn abri zi-rūyī nīlgūn daryā*'; Mu'izzī begins with the same *misra*', but substitutes *sāj-gūn* (teak-coloured) for Farrukhī's *nīlgūn* (indigo). Mu'izzī's *nasīb* is longer and more mannered and elaborate than Farrukhī's, but the resemblance is close. The rest of the poem, though it contains a number of echoes of Farrukhī in rhyme and vocabulary immediately recognisable to anyone familiar with the original poem, is unlike Farrukhī's, which is entirely devoted to praise of Maḥmūd, without any self-reference or indication of date or occasion.

Although Mu'izzī does not acknowledge his debt to Farrukhī in his poem to Ibn Bahmanyār, he shows his admiration for the older poet in three of his poems to Sayyid al-Ru'asā' and in one to Tāj al-Mulk, which suggests that these three 'leaders of the opposition' may have had another bond, a taste for Persian poetry. In two poems Mu'izzī speaks of Farrukhī and his patron Abū Bakr Quhistānī (see Chapter 3):

> Farrukhī thanks Bu Bakr Quhistānī several times in poems sweeter than pure water.
> I don't call myself Farrukhī, but I know you are as bounteous as a hundred Bu Bakr Quhistānīs.
> (p. 457, ll. 10786–87/pp. 425–26, to Tāj al-Mulk)

> Everyone remembers of Bu Bakr Quhistānī that he once [*yak-rah*] bestowed riches on Farrukhī.
> With all the silver and gold and clothes you've given Mu'izzī, you've cast the name of Bu Bakr Quhistānī into the dust.
> (p. 731, ll. 16778–79/p. 656, to Sayyid al-Ru'asā')

In two other poems to Sayyid al-Ru'asā', there are quotations from Farrukhī: '*qāfileh dar qāfileh ast u kārvān dar kārvān*' (Farrukhī p. 337, l.21, to Manṣūr b.Ḥasan Maymandī; Mu'izzī, p. 609, l.14118/p. 555). Finally, towards the end of a panegyric which, as the *du'ā'* reveals, was written for 'Īd al-Fiṭr (pp. 739 ff./p. 664), there is a six-*bayt* passage on the timely departure of Ramaḍān and the pleasures of drinking wine now that the fast is over (ll. 16964 ff.), which was evidently inspired by the *nasīb* of Farrukhī's famous and ambiguous *qaṣīda* to Amīr Muḥammad: '*Ramaḍān raft u rāh-i dūr girift andar bar*' (pp. 106–9). Mu'izzī was to imitate this *qaṣīda* again in a *qaṣīda* to Arslān Arghū, written after the death of Malikshāh (*Dīvān* p. 216/215).

Mu‘izzī nowhere makes any comment on the fall of Sayyid al-Ru’asā’ or Ibn Bahmanyār. Though he wrote several fine and famous *marthīyas*, it seems not to have been his practice to mention the fate of or condole with fallen patrons. It was otherwise with two well-known Arabic poets who were panegyrists of Ibn Bahmanyār and Sayyid al-Ru’asā’. Abū Isḥāq al-Kalbī al-Ghazzī, in a poem to Ibn Bahmanyār previously attributed to Abīvardī, combines words of sympathy with panegyric (Abīvardī 1899 pp. 116–18; EIr ‘Abīvardī’). After praying that God and the Prophet will help his patron, he tries to console him for the loss of his sight: though the eyes are gone, the mind is unaffected. He goes on to praise Ibn Bahmanyār for his many virtues and past achievements, especially the destruction of the fortresses of unspecified enemies; the hero of this operation is named as Abū’l-Fawāris, which may be Ibn Bahmanyār’s otherwise unknown *kunya*. Iqbāl (*Vizārat*, p. 102) suggests that these enemies were the Ismā’īlīs of Iṣfahān. The poem seems to show a genuine feeling of sympathy for Ibn Bahmanyār, and towards the end al-Ghazzī comments on the value of poetry and its possible use as a weapon:

> The *qaṣīda* is a precious thing which can be sold on a day of famine and a stagnant market …
> Everyone is frightened of poetry and its sword, and the blade is my blade and the swordbelt is my swordbelt.
>
> (p. 117, ll. 22, 24)

Abū Ismā’īl al-Ṭughrā’ī (b.453/1061) was a young secretary in the chancellery at the time of Sayyid al-Ru’asā’’s fall, and it is clear from the poems he wrote to Sayyid al-Ru’asā’ both before and after the disaster that he had received kindness and patronage from both father and son. He mourns the fall of ‘the house of Faḍl Allāh’ in several poems, some long and some very short (*Ṭughrā’ī* nos 125, 161, 200, 223), and compares the pair more than once to the Barmakids, both in their distinction and in their fate. He ends one of the longest and most striking of these poems, addressed jointly to father and son (no. 161, pp. 232–34), with a lament for the irreparable loss caused by their downfall, and the enduring and happy memories they leave behind: ‘The remembrance of you has increased in sweetness since your afflictions, just as sandalwood diffuses fragrance when fire touches it’ (p. 234, l. 3). In another long poem addressed to Sayyid al-Ru’asā’ personally (no.223) he urges patience and resignation, following the example of ‘truthful Joseph’, though, unlike al-Ghazzī, he does not specifically mention the blinding. It seems that his sympathy for Sayyid al-Ru’asā’ did him no harm in the eyes of Niẓām al-Mulk and his family; his *dīvān* contains four poems to the vizier, and five to his son Mu’ayyid al-Mulk, including a *marthīya* describing the circumstances of his death (*Ṭughrā’ī* nos 7, 8, 34, 194; 35, 158, 163, [*marthīya*], 95, 220).

The other early patrons of Mu'izzī have been grouped together either because Mu'izzī says explicitly that they were his father's patrons, or because the references to Burhānī in Mu'izzī's poems and their local affiliations suggest that this was so. Most of them were regionally influential, but, with one or two exceptions, not major figures in Malikshāh's administration, and Mu'izzī apparently no longer sought their patronage after he became established at Malikshāh's court. In most cases he addressed only one poem to each of them, probably dating from early in his career. These poems usually end with an autobiographical passage, the constant themes of which, as in the poems to 'Alā' al-Daula and Sayyid al-Ru'asā', are the poet's misery and helplessness after his father's death, his difficulties in obtaining official recognition from Malikshāh, and his natural claim to Burhānī's title and position, both as his father's heir and successor and, in his own right, as an even better poet than Burhānī. These patrons fall into three categories, with some overlapping: senior military men, major local officials, and relatives or associates of Niẓām al-Mulk. The military men were Amīr Diyā' al-Mulk Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf b.Bājir or Tājir (the name is variously spelt), of whom little is known; according to Ibn al-Athīr, he had commanded Chaghrī Beg's troops (IA X p. 179), and Iqbāl (*Vizārat* p. 81) says that Niẓām al-Mulk served him as a secretary before attaching himself to Chaghrī Beg. The second military man was a much more notable figure, 'Imād al-Daula Savtigīn, the *ghulām* officer of Alp Arslān who became one of Malikshāh's chief generals. He played a major part in the defeat of Malikshāh's uncle Qāvurd at Ḥamadān in 465/1072–3 (Bundārī pp. 48–49; Ḥusainī pp. 56–58; CHIR V p. 89), and was appointed Amīr of Kirmān and Iraq; Mu'izzī calls him *amīr-i 'Irāq* (p. 651, l.15046/p. 589), which suggests that the poem was written soon after the event. He later held important posts in Armenia and Transoxania. He was the patron of Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im, and probably shared his hostility to the vizier.

The members of the second group, the provincial officials, were all, with the exception of Ibn Bahmanyār of Fārs, major dignitaries in the province of Jibāl. Sharafshāh, the *rā'īs* of Qazvīn, has already been mentioned. A poem to him, written for Mihragān, is of considerable interest for Mu'izzī's biography. The poet praises Sharafshāh's virtues: 'Because of your generosity no one in Qazvīn is poor; because of your justice, no one in Qazvīn is wronged', but then goes on to complain bitterly and at length that since his father's death there has been no more patronage; when he came to pay his respects, the doorkeeper refused to let him in, and when he sent a panegyric he got no response (pp. 75–76, ll.1494–1505/p. 75, ll.11–21). Another poem, headed only 'to one of his father's patrons' (pp. 183–84), may also be to Sharafshāh; although the patron is addressed several times as '*shāh*' and Burhānī is referred to as 'your highness's friend [*khalīl-i hazrat-i tū*]', there are no other indications of the identity of the *mamdūḥ*. The tone is even more desperate; the season is autumn, Mu'izzī says he is a stranger in the patron's city, but is

leaving, because otherwise he will have the blood of all his relatives on his head (presumably because he is unable to support them), and he appeals to the patron for immediate relief, in virtue of his patronage of Burhānī (p. 184, ll.1482–87). Muʿizzī also addressed two poems to Sharafshāh's son-in-law, an unidentified Amīr ʿUmar who had been another of Burhānī's patrons. In the first poem (pp. 190–91), he speaks of the Amīr as coming with a victorious army to a Qazvīn full of lights and decorations: 'The Sultan's Burhānī gloried in his glory; now it is the son's turn to pay his respects' (1. 557). The Amīr is the son of Qivām al-Dīn, a powerful and successful man; through him ʿUmar has retainers (*ḥashamat*) and a high position. In the second poem (pp. 319–20/304) ʿUmar is described as the son of the vizier of the sovereign (*shāhriyār*). 'Qivām al-Dīn' was one of Niẓām al-Mulk's titles, and it is just possible that ʿUmar was one of his sons, although none of the known sons of Niẓām al-Mulk have the *ism* of ʿUmar.

Sayyid Abū Hāshim ʿAlavī, *rāʾīs* of Ḥamadān, was the recipient of a single poem of no great interest (pp.184–6/185–7), in which Muʿizzī praises his ʿAlid descent and his generosity to poets: 'You never let a poet who set foot in your palace go away empty-handed' (p. 186, 1. 4435). He expresses the hope that Abū Hāshim will treat him with the same generosity that Alp Arslān showed to Burhānī. Abū Hāshim himself was an important and highly connected figure in Ḥamadān. He was *rāʾīs* for 47 years, from *c.*455/1063 until his death in 502/1108–9, when he was succeeded by his son; his mother was a daughter of the Ṣāḥib Ibn ʿAbbād, and he was exceedingly wealthy. Towards the end of his life, in 500/1106–7, he was the object of an intrigue aimed at depriving him of his position and disgracing him in the eyes of Sultan Muḥammad, the details of which are variously given by Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and Ibn al-Athīr, but he managed to extricate himself by paying the money-loving Sultan 700,000 dinars (800,000, according to Ẓahīr al-Dīn) in cash, and out of his own resources, which is commented on with astonishment by all three historians (Bundārī 1889 pp. 97–98; ZD pp. 42–3/75–7; IA X pp. 332–33). Muʿizzī's other Jibālī patrons were all from Rayy. Abū Ṭāhir Mutahhar b.'Alī ʿAlavī was the hereditary *naqīb* of the ʿAlids of Rayy, and Bākharzī, who gives his *kunya* as Abū'1-Ḥasan, records meeting him in Rayy (pp. 98–99). Muʿizzī's poem to him (pp. 36–40/45–7) is strongly religious in flavour. The 15-*bayt nasīb* is a sermon in praise of ʿAlī and his sons; the *gurīzgāh* gives the patron a string of ʿAlid titles – *sayyid-i sādāt*, *dhū'l-fakhrayn … al-imām b.al-imām*, *al-murtaḍa b.al-murtaḍa* (ll.703–4/p. 46, ll.11–12). Muʿizzī appeals to Abū Ṭāhir as a patron of Burhānī: 'Burhānī paid you sincere service with his heart; he found in your fortune both refuge and hope. I will pay you service as sincere as my father's' (pp. 39–40, ll. 729–30/p. 47, ll. 7–8).

The other two patrons from Rayy are both named as '*rāʾīs* of the city of Rayy', though it appears from the contents of the poems to them, which seem to have been written at about the same time, that they may have

performed different functions in the city. Abū Sahl ʻAbd al-Rahīm, of whom nothing else is known, is described as being in charge of the fortress of Rayy; the *nasīb* of Muʻizzī's poem to him (pp. 634–6/575–7) depicts the poet's journey to a great castle, strong and well-manned, where the patron is to be found. He seems to have been responsible for the city's buildings:

> The soil [*turbat*] of Rayy is like Paradise, and you are like Ridwān.
> The fortress of Rayy is like Tūr [Sinai] and you are of the stamp of Moses.
> The city owes its beauty to you, the fortress owes its splendour [*ḥashamat*] to you.
>
> (p. 635, ll. 14686 ff.)

Towards the end of the poem there is a familiar passage of self-reference:

> Lord, if Burhānī is gone, Muʻizzī is his deputy; the nightingale's child in the garden is better than the nightingale.
> When I showed my poetry to the Sultan in Khurāsān the Sultan of the world gave the slave a diploma and robe.
> Through Malikshāh's fortune, I have become as fortunate as Burhānī was through the *farr* of the *pādshāh* Alp Arslān.
>
> (pp. 635–36, ll. 14688 ff.)

Muʻizzī ends his poem with three lines (14693–95) referring to his own craftsmanship (Chapter 7); the passage suggests that the patron had some knowledge of the technicalities of poetry. He concludes by saying that now he has paid homage to Abū Sahl as a duty of friendship, he will take up the service of the court and the road to Iṣfahān.

Thiqat al-Mulk Abū Muslim Surūshyārī, also named as *rāʼīs* of Rayy, is much better-known, and there are several mentions of him in the sources. He was a son-in-law of Niẓām al-Mulk and regarded as a strong supporter of his father-in-law. In 485/1092, in the succession struggle that followed the death of Malikshāh, Niẓām al-Mulk's *ghulāms* (the Nizamīyya) smuggled the 13-year-old Berkyārūq, Malikshāh's eldest surviving son and the candidate for the succession favoured by Niẓām al-Mulk, out of Iṣfahān, and brought him to his *atabeg* Gumushtigīn Jāndār in Sāveh and Āveh, who took him to Rayy and put him on the throne; Abū Muslim placed a jewelled crown on his head (ZD pp. 35–6/56). Abū Muslim had apparently been *rāʼīs* of Rayy since the early 460s, when Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ was living in the city after having been recruited as an Ismāʼīlī *dāʼī*. According to Ibn al-Athīr, Abū Muslim suspected him of infiltrating a group of Egyptian *dāʼīs* into the castle of Alamūt, which was nominally under the control of Sharafshāh of Qazvīn, and attempted to arrest him, but without success. Ḥasan fled from Rayy and made his way to Egypt, where he spent the three years 471–4/

1078–81 (IA X p. 216, year 494). Kāshānī, using sources that would not have been available to Ibn al-Athīr, as they did not come to light until after the fall of Alamūt to the Mongols in 1256, dates Abū Muslim's pursuit of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ to the period after, rather than before, Ḥasan's visit to Egypt, and associates it with the enmity which arose between Niẓām al-Mulk and Ḥasan while he was living in Rayy. The later date seems rather more likely, as Ḥasan, on his return from Egypt, embarked on an extremely active proselytising campaign in northern Iraān. This was a matter of great concern to Niẓām al-Mulk, and Abū Muslim, both as the senior civilian official in Rayy and as Niẓām al-Mulk's son-in-law, took a leading part in the hunt for Ḥasan. In 488/1095 this was to cost him his life; he was assassinated by one Khudādād of Rayy. His name is the sixth in the list of the victims of Ismā'īli *fidā'īs* that was preserved at Alamūt; Niẓām al-Mulk is the first (Kāshānī 1964 pp. 122, 25, 54; Lewis 1985 pp.45–56).

Mu'izzī was probably in Rayy in 466/1073–4, after he had received his diploma but before he settled in Iṣfahān. His poem to Abū Muslim (pp. 212–3/211–2) seems to have been written in the autumn, perhaps for Mihragān, as the charming *nasīb* describes the garden and the landscape in winter: the birds have gone, the pools are frozen, and everything is covered in snow, but the spring will return through Abū Muslim's fortune. He is addressed as *ṣadr-i 'Irāqīyān*, *khudāvand-i Rāzīyān*, *sitūdeh rā'īs-i buzūrgvār*; he is head of the family of Surūshyār, as his father died when he was a child (p. 213). After a passage of praise, Mu'izzī comes to the reason for his visit.

> I came from Nīshāpūr to Rayy, and travelled to this country in order to serve you.
> In your *majlis* there was a beloved poet; Mu'izzī is the memorial [*yādgār*] of that beloved poet.
> I have received a diploma and robe from the Sovereign; I was fortunate in the Sovereign's diploma and robe.
> I know that your service was my father's choice; I too, like my father, choose this service.
> For ten days I recited panegyrics on your carpet, and now I shall go to the service of the Sultan of the age.
> My mind is a sea, the pearls in it are discourse; I'll scatter largesse of pearls in your noble *majlis.*
>
> (ll. 5131–36)

He ends the poem with praise for the patron's judgment of poetry, and routine good wishes. This poem and the poem to Abū Sahl, probably written at about the same time, give the impression that Mu'izzī had reached a turning-point in his life. He was assured of the Sultan's patronage, and was in effect bidding farewell, with warmth and gratitude, to his father's patrons in Jibāl; it seems that he never returned to this western province of Iran.

The remaining two poems that belong to this early period are both addressed to close adherents of Niẓām al-Mulk. The short *qaṣīda* to Adīb Mukhtār Zauzanī (pp. 116–7/116–7), a noted Arabic scholar and poet who was one of Kamāl al-Daula's deputies in the *dīvān-i inshā'*, a close friend of Bākharzī, and apparently a distinguished calligrapher, begins with a riddling *nasīb* in praise of the patron's pen, and is not much more than an elaborate and polite request that the diploma granted by Malikshāh be written in Adīb Mukhtār's own hand. 'To me, the writing of my diploma is better than the robe, for it is a casket full of jewels and a treasury of dinars' (l. 2591/p. 117, l. 2). The other poem is to Sharaf al-Mulk Abū Sa'd Muḥammad b.Manṣūr al-Mustaufī al-Khwārazmī, who has been mentioned earlier; he was the chief *mustaufī* under Alp Arslān and for most of Malikshāh's reign, until he paid the Sultan 100,000 dinars to release him from his post. As this implies, he was enormously rich. He was an ardent Hanafī; he built a shrine (*mashhad*) over the tomb of Abū Hanīfa in Baghdād, and, perhaps inspired by or in rivalry with the Shāfi'ī Niẓām al-Mulk, two Hanafī *madrasas*, one at the Bāb al-Tāq in Baghdād and the other in Marv. He died in Iṣfahān in 494/1101 (IA X p. 223).

The poem now to be considered (p. 425/397) is the first of eleven *qaṣīda*s and one *musammaṭ* addressed to Sharaf al-Mulk; Muʻizzī continued to enjoy his patronage after his arrival in Iṣfahān. In it, Muʻizzī invokes Burhānī's name in appealing for patronage. 'Burhānī in the reckoning of years was older than you [*az shumār-i qidam būd pīsh-i tū*]. His name and character were famous everywhere. He is gone and I am his deputy and son' (ll. 10054–55). This poem is interesting because it is quite unlike Muʻizzī's other poems to Sharaf al-Mulk; it appears to be a display piece, intended to impress a new patron with a show of Arabic learning. The rhyme-letter '*f*' is unique in Muʻizzī's *dīvān*. The last word of every *bayt* and many other words in the poem are Arabic or of Arabic origin, and there are several short passages of Arabic in the body of the text. The erotic *nasīb* in particular is a curious mixture of Persian and Arabic, basically Persian but with lines or half-lines in Arabic. The poet, dusty and untidy, on his way from Khurāsān to (Persian) Iraq to pay his respects to the patron, catches sight of a beautiful and elegantly dressed slave-boy going into the slave-dealer's house, and instantly falls desperately in love, but the price is too high. The treatment of the subject, with its narrative content and lightness of touch, is more in Farrukhī's manner than Muʻizzī's usual erotic *nasībs*, which tend to be rather lachrymose meditations on the beloved's beauty and unkindness.

Muʻizzī's later poems to Sharaf al-Mulk are much more Persian in vocabulary and style; perhaps, on closer acquaintance with his patron, he may have realised that Sharaf al-Mulk, unlike Niẓām al-Mulk, enjoyed and was interested in Persian poetry. The only *musammaṭ* (a stanzaic form) in Muʻizzī's *dīvān* is addressed to him, and five of the eleven *qaṣīda*s have unusually long *nasībs*; in particular pp. 23 ff./35 ff. and pp. 57 ff./59 ff.

(46 and 38 *bayts* respectively), which describe the poet's night journey to the patron. As in the poems to Sayyid al-Ru'asā', there is little historical content, apart from references to Malikshāh's affection for Sharaf al-Mulk (pp. 233/231, 401/375, 513/474). In the only poem with any indication of date, Mu'izzī speaks of Malikshāh as having extended his realm from Antioch to Kāshghar (p. 317, l.7562/p. 302), apparently a reference to the Transoxanian campaign of 482/1089. On a personal level, Mu'izzī twice asks Sharaf al-Mulk for money, once for travel expenses (p. 319, ll.7571 ff.), and once for 200 dinars to help him pay a debt (p. 391, ll.9184 ff./p. 365).

At this point it may be useful to summarise what is known of Mu'izzī's early career and to try to establish a tentative chronology, before moving on to consider his life at court and his poems to his other major patrons there, Niẓām al-Mulk, Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im, and, above all, Sultan Malikshāh. Burhānī's death in Qazvīn, which seems to have been unexpected, probably occurred in the autumn or winter of 465/1072–3; Mu'izzī says in *Chahār Maqāla* that it was at the beginning of Malikshāh's reign, that is, after the murder of Alp Arslān in Transoxania in Rabi' I 465/ November 1072. Mu'izzī found himself stranded in Qazvīn, apparently without resources, as Sharafshāh was slow in coming to his assistance (pp.74–5/74–5). The course that seemed best to him was to go the rounds of Burhānī's more influential patrons, making as much use as possible of his father's name and reputation and his own claim to patronage as his father's heir and successor, and exploiting the pathos of his situation as a bereaved and loving son, until he could gain access to Malikshāh and establish a reputation of his own; he had no desire to spend his life at provincial courts. It is not clear in what order he made these visits. He may have gone to Abū Hāshim in Ḥamadān at an early stage, as he mentions Alp Arslān's patronage of Burhānī (p. 186), and also to Abū Ṭāhir Mutahhar of Rayy. He then seems to have returned to Nīshāpūr, ostensibly to deal with the family and financial problems, which he refers to in the poem to the unnamed patron of his father (pp. 183–4/184–5), but the presence of the Sultan in Nīshāpūr in the spring of 465–6/1073 must have provided an even stronger motive.

Malikshāh had been in Transoxania with his father when Alp Arslān was assassinated; he abandoned the campaign, returned to Khurāsān with Niẓām al-Mulk and the army, and took up residence in Nīshāpūr (IA X p. 51). It was there that Mu'izzī made his appeal to 'Alā' al-Daula and was presented to the Sultan. In his poem to Savtigīn, he says that 'the prince [*malik*] in the city of Nīshāpūr' (that is, 'Alā' al-Daula) recommended that the Sultan should accept him and grant him the diploma and other perquisites of his office as *amīr al-shu'arā'* (p. 652, ll.15069–77/p. 590), and to Abū Sahl 'Abd al-Rahīm he says that it was in Khurāsān that he showed his poetry to the Sultan and was given his diploma and *khil'at* (p. 635, l.14690/p. 576). This was at the beginning of Ramaḍān (presumably 466), which fell in April–May 1073, that is, some six months or so after the deaths of Alp

Arslān and Burhānī, and before Malikshāh left to deal with his rebellious uncle Qāvurd, who had invaded Iraq and seized Iṣfahān. This is not entirely consistent with Mu'izzī's statement to Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī that he had been in Malikshāh's service for a year before seeing the Sultan, and that he asked 'Alā' al-Daula for permission to return (*bāz gardad*) to Nīshāpūr to pay his debts and live in retirement if the Sultan would not receive him. However, Malikshāh may have been encamped outside Nīshāpūr, or even perhaps living in the palace of Shādyākh that Mas'ūd of Ghazna had built in a suburb of Nīshāpūr; in any case, Mu'izzī's memory may have been uncertain after more than 40 years.

Two of Mu'izzī's poems to Malikshāh may belong to this period. In the first one (pp. 149 ff./148), he says that Khurāsān, grown old in the winter snows, has been rejuvenated by the arrival of the young king, who has brought the spring with him and restored order to Nīshāpūr: 'When the light of your banner fell upon Nīshāpūr, after violence and disaster justice and safety made their appearance' (l. 3445). The second poem (pp. 700 ff./629) apparently refers to Malikshāh's presence in Nīshāpūr, and is notable because it contains the only mention of Burhānī in all Mu'izzī's 100-odd poems to Malikshāh, which suggests that it is an early one:

> The people of Nīshāpūr rejoice in prosperity because the beneficent Sultan cherishes his slaves.
> Gabriel's message keeps coming from heaven that your Nīshāpūr is happier than the garden of Eden …
> Although Burhānī's life has ended, the heir of such a life will be your servant until the Resurrection.
> His soul keeps saying 'My son, you are the rightful inheritor of my rights before the Sultan of the world'.
>
> (ll. 16076 ff.)

Arguments for dating events in a poet's life are very seldom conclusive, and a slightly puzzling point is that Mu'izzī nowhere mentions or refers to the first major military success of Malikshāh's reign, the campaign against the invading Qāvurd which ended with the total defeat and capture of Qāvurd and his seven sons after a three-day battle outside Ḥamadān, probably in the autumn or winter of 465/1072–3. (Bundārī, Ibn al-Athīr, and Sibt ibn al-Jauzī date the battle to Sha'bān 465/April 1072–73; Ḥusainī dates it to Jumādā 466/January 1074). Jājarmī quotes a poem by an otherwise unknown poet, Nāṣir Ja'farī, congratulating Malikshāh (named as *sultān-i mu'aẓẓam, malik-i mashriq u maghrib*), which must have been composed soon after this battle:

> Through the new Shāh and the new victory and the new kingdom, justice has come and injustice has gone, thank God! …

> The enemy who brought his army from Kirmān to Iṣfahān arrogantly invaded the Shāh's kingdom …
> Kirmān [Qāvurd's principality] was not enough for him, he was greedy for Irān. (ll. 3, 5, 14)

Ja'farī says that Malikshāh and his army left the battlefield (*razm*) for Iṣfahān in the month of Abān (21 October–20 November), which confuses the date even further (Jājarmī II pp.475–77; de Blois 1992 no.162). A poem for this occasion might have been expected from the Sultan's newly appointed *amīr al-shu'arā'*, who was to produce many panegyrics on subsequent victories; perhaps commissions from the court were slow in coming. At all events, Mu'izzī continued to look for additional patronage. The poems to the *ru'asā'* of Rayy have already been mentioned, and he tells Savtigīn that he is hungry for more: 'I who am my father's deputy am like the lion in the thicket [*shīr-i 'arīn*] in the meadow of learning [*marghzār-i 'ulūm*] … thirsting for your favour as I thirst for fresh water' (p. 652, ll. 15070 ff.).

It was essential that he should ingratiate himself with Niẓām al-Mulk and be seen to enjoy his favour, whatever his private opinion of the Vizier's usefulness as a patron, and he did in fact address 13 *qaṣīdas* to him. The comment he made in *Chahār Maqāla* is too sweeping, though it appears from the available evidence that Niẓām al-Mulk took little interest in Persian poetry. De Blois's comprehensive listing and survey of Persian poets mentions only three who addressed poems to him, Mu'izzī himself, one Abū Naṣr Aḥmad b.Ibrāhīm al-Tāliqānī (de Blois 1992 no. 19), and Lāmi'ī Gurgānī or Dihistānī, of whose *dīvān* some thousand or so lines have been preserved in anthologies and dictionaries (de Blois 1992 p. 93). Lāmi'ī was a panegyrist of Alp Arslān and of 'Amīd al-Mulk Kundurī. His three surviving *qaṣīda*s to Niẓām al-Mulk, only one of which is complete, are remarkable for their enormous *nasībs*, all that is left of two of them (*Dīvān* nos 42, 65 pp. 122 ff.; no. 71 pp. 135 ff.). Clinton (EI² 'Lāmi'ī') comments that Lāmi'ī was 'an enthusiastic but unexceptional imitator of the great Ghaznavid poets'; it seems to the present writer that his poems more closely resemble those of his approximate contemporary 'Am'aq of Bukhārā (already mentioned as the chief panegyrist of the Qarakhānid Khāns Shams al-Mulk Naṣr and his brother Khidr), which are likewise notable for their extraordinary *nasībs.*

Niẓām al-Mulk does seem to have been a generous patron of Arabic poets, which would be consistent with his devotion to Arabic learning and theology. Abīvardī and Ṭughrā'ī, for example, wrote a number of poems to him, but the most striking evidence for his patronage of Arabic poetry is the list of nearly 30 poets who were his panegyrists, and whose origins ranged from Syria and Azerbaijān to Khurāsān and Transoxania (Bākharzī *passim*). Some of their poems were presented to him at the gates of such cities as Manārgird and Kharshāna on the borders of Armenia and the Byzantine

empire, Ushna and Tabrīz in Azerbaijan, Mayyāfāriqīn in the Jazīra, Qinnāsrīn and Na'ura in Syria, and one when he dismounted to cross the Euphrates into Syria, presumably when he was campaigning in these areas in Alp Arslān's reign. Some of these poets appear to have been local literary men, perhaps hoping to profit from a unique occasion, but others were men of some distinction; they included Niẓām al-Mulk's secretary Abū Ṭāhir 'Alī b.'Ubaydallāh al-Shīrāzī, whose *dīvān* Bākharzī saw in the Niẓām library (*al-khizāna al-nizāmīyya*) in Nīshāpūr.

Mu'izzī's *qaṣīda*s to Niẓām al-Mulk follow the standard pattern of lavish praise of his virtues, justice, administrative ability, maintenance of good order in the realm, and generosity, much of which can be regarded as routine. Some, however, are of particular interest to the present study as they have a historical context that is unusual in Mu'izzī's poems to senior officials, and which reflects Niẓām al-Mulk's unique position as both father-figure to the Sultan and head of the bureaucracy. His other major titles, Qivām al-Dīn and *rāḍī-yi khalīfa* ('pleasing to the Caliph'), are repeated in almost every poem, with some additions; he is twice named as 'the Shāh's *atabeg*' (pp. 235/233, 370/347), and several times given the Ghaznavid title of Shams-i Kufāt, which is associated with Maymandī. This would no doubt have pleased Niẓām al-Mulk, who, as is clear from the *Siyāsat-nāma*, was an ardent admirer of Ghaznavid administrative practices, and was old enough (born *c.*409/1018) to know of and possibly even to have seen Maymandī, who died in 424/1032–33. The interdependence of sultan and vizier is a constant topic; they are seen as two halves of a whole. The sword in Malikshāh's hand and the pen in Niẓām al-Mulk's are two all-conquering and incomparable miracles (p. 236, ll.5734–35/p. 234); Malikshāh's success is linked with Niẓām al-Mulk's continued well-being because their fortunes are joined (*qarīn*) (p. 628, l.14515/p. 570), and Malikshāh's sword is mighty because Niẓām al-Mulk's pen is the friend or beloved (*yār*) of his sword (p. 679, l.15652/p. 613). The Sultan's conquests and the prosperity of his realm are attributed to Niẓām al-Mulk's good management:

> It is because of your fortune, capacity, management and judgment that the coinage and *khuṭba* in east and west are in his name.
>
> (p. 679, l. 15653)

> Through the writing [*naqsh*] of your pen Malikshāh's realm flourishes like the orchard and rose-garden [*bustān u gulistān*] in the month of Farvardīn.
>
> (p. 626, l. 14520)

This was Niẓām al-Mulk's own view of his role, in the culminating quarrel which took place in the last year of their lives: 'My inkstand and your crown are bound together [*dar ham basteh*] and are twins [*tau'amānand*]' (IA X pp.

63–64; ZD pp. 33/50). Mu'izzī was well-placed to know about this underlying conflict, but discretion forbade the slightest allusion to it.

Specific historical references make it possible to suggest tentative dates for some of the poems to Niẓām al-Mulk. The two poems that name him as Malikshāh's *atabeg* probably belong to the early years of the reign. One of them (p. 370/347), which speaks of 'Khans and Tigins' as being subject to Niẓām al-Mulk, must refer to Malikshāh's first campaign in Transoxania in 466/1073, as does another poem (p. 473/440), which depicts Niẓām al-Mulk as playing a very active part in the campaign:

> You took your exalted banner from 'Irāq to Turkestan, where you made the Tigīns slaves, the Khāns *ghulāms*;
> Where you made the air like a garden with the colour of your banners, where you made the earth like the sky with the colour of your tents;
> Where you conquered fortresses, each one of which … had Pisces as its roof …
> If the cloud of your mercy had not rained water on the fire, the land of Turkestan would have become ruby-red from the Sultan's sword.
>
> (ll. 11157 ff.)

Ibn al-Athīr records that Shams al-Mulk, driven out of Samarqand by Malikshāh, asked for peace and implored Niẓām al-Mulk to mediate, as Mu'izzī's poem implies (IA X pp. 63–64). Another poem also seems to belong to the period before Malikshāh's career of conquest began; Niẓām al-Mulk is described as the minister of a king who, if he moved (*nashāṭ konad*), would go from Khurāsān to Iraq; his flag would go from Marv to Marwa and Zamzam (i.e. Mecca), his army from Balkh to Karkh and Bāb al-Tāq (i.e. Baghdād) (p. 429, ll.10116 ff./p. 401). Two poems relate to campaigns that took place 10 years and more later, in the Jazīra and Syria, when Malikshāh took Harrān, Mosul, Aleppo and Antioch, and reached the shores of the Mediterranean (477–8/1084–5). 'This year Rūm and Shām were conquered; another year it will be Egypt and Qayrawān' (a hint at a possible war against the Fātimids) (p. 615, l. 14258/p. 559). The second poem refers to this campaign, and either to Malikshāh's temporary abandonment of his Syrian expedition in order to deal with the rebellion of his brother Tekesh in Transoxania, or to his major campaign in the same area in 482/1089: 'This year [the Sultan] crossed the Jayhūn in victory, just as last year he crossed the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris' (p. 61, l. 1157/p. 63). As Niẓām al-Mulk was by now in his seventies, it seems unlikely that he took part in the fighting, but the same poem presents him as the Sultan's guiding star: 'It is through your mind and intellect that his victories are a wonder and a marvel in the world' (p. 62, 1. 1158).

Another point of note in Mu‘izzī's poems to Niẓām al-Mulk is the frequent emphasis on the Vizier's piety and devotion to Sunni Islam. He is the scourge of the 'polytheists' (*mushrikān*), and he could even convert the Manichaeans (*mānavīyān*) of China and the Christians of Byzantium (p. 236, l.5719/p. 234). He is seen as possessing religious as well as temporal authority: 'No vizier in the world except you has been so expert in the Shari'a and in what is *ḥalāl* and *ḥaram*; what you approve God will approve' (p. 679, 1. 15674/p. 613). If Niẓām al-Mulk's pen rains 'licit enchantment' (*siḥr-i ḥalāl*), opposition to him is *ḥaram*; whoever is his loyal servant will find favour with God and the Sultan (p. 474, l.11175/441). He is named as *rāḍī-yi āl-i 'Alī* in one poem (p. 625, l.14476/p. 568), which suggests that he may have been well-disposed towards the 'Alids. He may also have had Ṣūfī sympathies; it will be remembered that Mu‘izzī told Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī that he paid no attention to anyone but imams and *mutasawwifa* (Ṣūfīs). In an unusually interesting and outspoken passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, Mu‘izzī suggests that he will give up poetry as a profession because the rewards are so small, and turn Ṣūfī:

> My heart is weary of poetry, and this is no wonder, because the market for poets is slack.
> … perhaps I should give up the elegances and subtleties of poetry and go on the path of Ṣūfīsm [*tasawwuf*], like Bu 'Alī Duqāq.
> How can I travel with threadbare tents and clothes … and with insufficient salary and money?
> Although I know it is my bounden duty to serve the King of the World and you, in obedience to the Creator,
> It is not good and does not befit the Amīr of the people of discourse [*ahl-i sukhan*, i.e. Mu‘izzī himself] that his dress [*rakht*] should be like a *ghāzī*'s and his lodging like a pilgrim's.
> If I were not in honour bound to adore the King, and if I were not under an obligation to serve you,
> I would let the cup fall from my hand at the *majlis*, go home and set my poems high above the arch.
>
> (p. 430, ll. 10136 ff./p. 402)

Abū 'Alī Duqaq (d.405/1014) was a well-known religious scholar and Ṣūfī ascetic of Nīshāpūr, who often preached in a *madrasa* named after him; he was the teacher and father-in-law of a much more famous Nīshāpūrī Ṣūfī, Abū'l-Qāsim Qushayrī (d.467/1074) (IA X p. 59; EI^2 'Kushairī'). Both these names would have been very familiar to Niẓām al-Mulk, and even more so to Mu‘izzī himself as a citizen of Nīshāpūr.

Finally, the style of Mu‘izzī's poems to Niẓām al-Mulk deserves some comment. They contrast strongly with the poems by Lāmi'ī; five of the thirteen *qaṣīdas* have no *nasīb* at all, and the *nasībs* of the rest are all short and on conventional topics, either erotic or seasonal, including an agreeable

description, in a Mihragān poem (p. 601/548), of the losing battle of the spring month Farvardīn with the army of the autumn month Tishrīn. There are virtually no *Shāhnāma* references, and the only poets mentioned are the Arabic poets Farazdaq and Jarīr (p. 235/233). The poems contain much Arabic vocabulary and many Arabic phrases. Two are especially noteworthy, both with the rhyme *-āq*; the use of the non-Persian letter *qāf* makes it almost inevitable that the final word of every *bayt* is Arabic or of Arabic origin. The first of these poems (p. 427/399), which is exceptionally rich in Arabic vocabulary, may be a display poem (cf. previous comments on poems to Sharaf al-Mulk Mustaufī and others), and is possibly the first of Mu'izzī's poems to Niẓām al-Mulk. It is, perhaps incidentally, the only one that gives his full personal name, Abū 'Alī Ḥasan b.'Alī b.Ishāq (this was probably why the rhyme was chosen), and is not remarkable apart from its Arabic element; it ends with an expression of gratitude to the patron for saving the poet from the fear of poverty (*khashiya al-imlāq*, p. 429, l.10103/p. 401). The second poem, which immediately follows it in the *dīvān*, is of much more interest. It contains the passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* quoted in the previous paragraph, and the atmosphere seems to be more informal than in other poems to Niẓām al-Mulk. The poet, having unburdened himself of his grievances, calls for wine and a beautiful cup-bearer as the remedy for all ills, and the *du'ā'* expresses the hope that 'the vizierate which has come to you from your father and grandfather [*sic*]' will remain in the family till the Day of Judgment (l.10154).

Much space has been given to Mu'izzī's poems to Niẓām al-Mulk, although they are comparatively few in number, because of the enormous importance of his position for almost the whole of Malikshāh's reign. Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im Marzbān b.Khusrau Fīrūz Shīrāzī or Fārsī, his rival and possibly his successor in the last few months of Malikshāh's life (it is not completely clear from the sources whether Niẓām al-Mulk was actually dismissed from the vizierate), is the *mamdūḥ* of four *qaṣīda*s by Mu'izzī that have already been touched on very briefly. Though both men were, by general consent, extremely competent and gifted administrators, they could hardly have been more different in character and personality, and this is vividly illustrated in the only visible remains they left behind them, the large and small dome-chambers of the Friday Mosque in Iṣfahān. It seems likely that this dome-chamber and the *madrasa* that Tāj al-Mulk built in Baghdād between 480/1087 and 482/1089 ('the famous *Tājīyya*', according to Ibn al-Athīr) were intended to rival and outdo Niẓām al-Mulk's buildings in Iṣfahān and Baghdād. The *Tājīyya* was located at Bāb Abrāz, where Tāj al-Mulk had had a *turba* (mausoleum) and tombstone set up for the famous Shāfi'ī divine Abū Ishāq Shīrāzī (d.476/1083–4). Tāj al-Mulk, like Niẓām al-Mulk, was a devout Shāfi'ī, and this could have been seen as a mark of respect; Abū Ishāq had also been much revered by Niẓām al-Mulk and had taught in the Niẓāmīyya *madrasa* in Baghdād (Ibn al-Jauzī IX pp. 38, 46; IA X p. 120; Makdisi 1961 pp. 1–56).

These buildings may be seen as signs of an increasingly successful propaganda campaign by Tāj al-Mulk during the years 480–5/1086~7–92, and possibly earlier, to strengthen his influence with the Sultan and play a more conspicuous role in the administration, with the ultimate aim of replacing Niẓām al-Mulk as vizier. His position in Malikshāh's household as supervisor of the Sultan's treasury and wardrobe, vizier to the chief wife Terken Khātūn and her sons, and also with some additional responsibilities for provincial and army affairs (Bundārī 1889 pp. 61–62; ZD pp. 32–3/49), gave him an unparalleled insight into the workings of the imperial family and an opportunity to exploit its dissensions. He was nearly 30 years younger than Niẓām al-Mulk (47 when he was murdered in 485/1092). Bundārī and Mu'izzī both suggest, from their very different standpoints, that he was physically impressive, clever and persuasive, ideally equipped to present himself as an alternative to the grim old vizier, whose domination Malikshāh had long outgrown and found increasingly intolerable. The office of *ṭughrā'ī* and head of the *dīvān-i inshā'*, which he acquired after the death of Adīb Mukhtār Zauzanī, 'was often a stepping-stone to the vizierate' (Lambton 1988 p.34). In the *Siyāsat-nāma*, Niẓām al-Mulk expresses deep disapproval of such a multiplicity of posts; perhaps he had Tāj al-Mulk in mind: 'Today there are incompetents who hold ten posts while capable men are unemployed' (SN ch. 41). Mu'izzī comments with admiration and also, perhaps, with some astonishment, on Tāj al-Mulk's various duties:

> You are the-renowned *kadkhudā*, the celebrated vizier of the Shāh's guarded house [i.e. his wife] and his dear son.
> Through your dignity [*jalāl*] three royal courts [*hazrat*] have dignity and honour; through your beauty [*jamāl*, a reference to his secondary title of Jamāl al-Dīn, and also perhaps to his personal appearance] three *dīvāns* have beauty and weight [*khaṭar*].
> … To kings, their house and treasure and sons are dear; to the Shāh, you are the crown [*tāj*] of his house and treasure and son.
> (p. 398, ll. 9375 ff./p. 371)

> You are, with your pen, the guardian and watchman of the Shāh's signature [*ṭughrā*], the royal palace [*dār-i mamlakat*], and the Shāh's treasure.
> No hand but yours has ever held three such offices, no pen but yours has ever performed such duties … your hand is Haydar, your pen Zulfikar.
> (p. 404, ll. 9518–19 ff./p. 377)

Tāj al-Mulk is named as *ṭughrā'ī* and Jamāl al-Dīn in other poems (p. 456/425, p. 636/577). Mu'izzī ignores the enmity between Niẓām al-Mulk and Tāj al-Mulk and presents them as good friends; he ends one poem with the

words: 'The Shāh and the *dastūr* [Niẓām al-Mulk] are grateful to you, and you rejoice in both of them' (p. 638, 1. 14751).

Not all Mu'izzī's poems to Tāj al-Mulk seem to have survived. In a poem with an autumnal *nasīb*, which suggests it was written for Mihragān, he says he recited two panegyrics to Tāj al-Mulk on the occasion of this festival, one in Samarqand and one in Iṣfahān (p. 638, l.14746). This must refer to Tāj al-Mulk's presence in Samarqand during Malikshāh's campaign in Transoxania in 482/1089, when, acting as Malikshāh's personal representative, he mediated in a dispute between the Khān of Kāshghar and his brother Ya'qūb-tigīn (IA X pp. 112–14; CHIR V pp. 92–93). Mu'izzī too was evidently in Samarqand with the Sultan, but none of the poems in the *dīvān* addressed to Tāj al-Mulk can be dated to this occasion.

How far the success of Tāj al-Mulk's buildings was due to his own artistic eye and how much to his choice of a gifted architect must remain doubtful, but he certainly seems to have been a connoisseur of literature. Mu'izzī's poems to him suggest that he was well-versed in Persian poetry and its charms and subtleties of language, and was also familiar with the poetry of Farrukhī. Mu'izzī makes much use of word-play and metaphor in the four poems to him. Two of the *nasībs* are erotic; another (p. 403/376) is an elaborate 'riddle of the pen', appropriate to the *ṭughrā'ī*, and rather similar to the poem to Tāj al-Mulk's predecessor Adīb Mukhtār Zauzanī (pp. 116–7/116–7). The fourth *nasīb* is in the Mihragān poem already mentioned (pp. 636 ff.), which begins with an imaginative description of autumn:

> Perhaps the wind of autumn is an alchemist; if not, how does it make the leaves of the vines golden?
> Perhaps the autumn wind knows the principle of mixing colours; if not, how does it make green into saffron?

The patron's interest in poetry and his generosity are an inspiration to the poet:

> My nature is, through poetry, a blossoming and wonderful garden, since I planted a tree of your praise in that garden.
> Its leaves and fruit have grown green every hour, its branches and roots have grown bigger.
> You might say its leaves and branches are each one musk and amber, you might say its leaves and fruits are all pearls and rubies.
>
> (p. 399, ll. 9385–87/p. 372)

> My longing to praise you is clothed in a garment whose weft is jewels, whose warp is ambergris.
> The gold of speech is purified by your presence, because your intellect assays it.

Even though men of eloquence and high fortune make copies of my poetry and praise it,
I am great through your 'Bravo!' [*aḥsant*], and it is because of you that my nature delights in the art of poetry and my verse excels.
(p. 404, ll. 9520 ff.)

The comparison of a poem to a garment recalls Farrukhī's famous *qaṣīda* '*ba karvān-i ḥulla bi-raftam zi Sīstān*' (pp. 331–33) and this is probably deliberate. In the most attractive of the poems to Tāj al-Mulk (p. 456/425), there is a direct reference to Farrukhī and his relationship with Abū Bakr Quhistānī, which was quoted in Chapter 3. It is followed by a charming 'second *nasīb*' depicting the beauties of the garden and the park in the spring, ending with a compliment (again apparently inspired by Farrukhī) to the patron:

Although the north wind has woven coloured robes for Judas-flowers and tulips, dog-roses and roses, in the garden,
The robes [Farrukhī's word *ḥulla*] woven by your pen are better still, because they have the embroidery of wisdom and the lustre of *adab*.
(ll. 10790 ff.)

Muʿizzī also heaps praise in all four poems on Tāj al-Mulk's skill as a calligrapher, and in one passage he seems to be comparing the calligraphy of a silver dirham with the patron's:

If the dirham is admirable because of its design [*naqsh*], and if the *ḥaram* is noble and of high repute because it is secure,
The design of the dirham has been stolen from his pen, the security of the *ḥaram* has been borrowed from his house.
(p. 404, ll. 9505–6/p. 377)

To turn from poems of this type to Muʿizzī's poems to Malikshāh is to enter a different world. Apart from the Sultan himself, his relatives and one or two others, the patrons of the first 20 years of Muʿizzī's career were Persian *dabīrs*, who often came from families with a long tradition of service as senior officials. Malikshāh, on the other hand, was very young and comparatively unsophisticated, only two generations away from a primitive background; his great-uncle Toghril Beg, the first Seljuq sultan, and his nomadic followers, were regarded by the Persians as barbarians. His family was purely Turkish, and the praise of Turks and the frequent references to his descent in Muʿizzī's poems suggest that he was very proud of it; at the same time, he was the absolute ruler of an almost entirely Persian-speaking state, which by the end of his reign had been extended to include the Arabic-speaking

population of the Jazīra and Syria and much of Turkish-speaking Transoxania. The degree to which the Seljuq sultans were educated and literate has been discussed in Chapter 1; it may be assumed that Malikshāh could speak, and probably read, Persian with a fair degree of fluency (the conversation between Mu'izzī, 'Alā' al-Daula and the Sultan recorded in *Chahār Maqāla* was evidently held in Persian), and the devoutness on which Mu'izzī frequently comments, combined with the tutelage of Niẓām al-Mulk, would suggest that he had some knowledge of Arabic.

Malikshāh's personality is not easy to assess, partly because, at least in the early years of his reign, he was so much overshadowed by the dominating presence of Niẓām al-Mulk, and Mu'izzī's poems confirm, but do not add much to, the accounts of him given in the *Seljūk-nāma* and by Ibn al-Athīr. He was above all an outstandingly successful military commander, able to muster and organise large forces, and prepared to move with a rapidity that astonished contemporaries; Mu'izzī comments several times on the speed with which he reached Khurāsān from Mosul in 477/1084 to put down a rebellion by his brother Tekesh. As with the Ghaznavid sultans, his favourite recreation was the warlike sport of hunting, and several of Mu'izzī's poems refer to this. Mu'izzī praises Malikshāh for all the standard kingly virtues, valour and success in war, justice, generosity and devotion to Islam, but there is little or nothing on any other outstanding or unusual traits or intellectual interests. It is a conventional and idealised portrait, lacking the individual touches that Farrukhī, working in an equally restricted context, sometimes gives to his picture of Maḥmūd, and it seems that Mu'izzī may have been on less close terms with Malikshāh than Farrukhī was with Maḥmūd and his family. There is a notable absence of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* in these poems, surprising in so large a body of poetry; Mu'izzī occasionally thanks the Sultan for a *khil'at* (e.g. p. 90/88, p. 142/142), but does not ask for anything else or complain of poverty, as he had done to other patrons and as Farrukhī did on occasion to Maḥmūd; there are frequent expressions of devotion to Malikshāh, but less evidence of personal feeling.

The picture can to some extent be filled out with anecdotes from the *Seljūk-nāma* and Ibn al-Athīr. Both writers present Malikshāh as a fairly simple character, confident as a war-leader, but in other matters susceptible to the influence of stronger personalities, in part because he was evidently a man of warm affections. Niẓām al-Mulk was for some years a father-figure to him; his friendship with Sayyid al-Ru'asā' has already been mentioned, and later the influence of Terken Khātūn became predominant. He was devoted to his sons, especially those of Terken Khātūn, who all died young; Ibn al-Athīr records that when Dā'ūd died in 474/1081, Malikshāh refused to let the child's body be buried until it was beginning to decay, and several times tried to kill himself. His love of hunting and his habit of building towers of the hooves of the gazelles and wild asses he killed, which Mu'izzī remarks on with admiration (p. 225, ll.5455 ff./p. 224), were combined with

great generosity to the poor, as he gave a Maghribi dinar in alms for every beast he killed (ZD 32/48); Ibn al-Athīr comments that this is the conduct of a man who holds himself answerable for all his actions (IA X p. 144). Unusually for a medieval ruler, he seems to have had some qualms about the amount of bloodshed involved in his favourite sport; after a hunt in which he brought down 10,000 (*sic*) beasts, he is reported to have said 'I'm a God-fearing man, why did I take the lives of these animals unnecessarily, and not for food?'. In the long obituary in which this is quoted, Ibn al-Athīr tells three stories about him that appear to indicate a strong sense of justice and a genuine feeling of responsibility towards his subjects and fellow-Muslims, based on deeply held religious beliefs and a desire to stand well with God: 'How will my case be tomorrow before God when I am asked about the rights of Muslims?' (IA X pp. 141–46). There is probably an element of conventional hagiography in this; but the personality presented is attractive.

The enormous number of Mu'izzī's poems to Malikshāh make it impracticable to analyse them all in detail; many of them are of a routine nature, commemorating the Persian and Islamic festivals, visits by the Sultan to various dignitaries, and so on. It has seemed best to select a few poems of particular historical or personal interest for comment. Three poems mention Malikshāh's relationship with Niẓām al-Mulk, and confirm his official or unofficial title of '*atabeg*': 'Fortune is your *nadīm*, the Vizier is your *atabeg*; the one is your brother, the other is your father' (p. 225, l. 5459/p. 224). Another poem couples sultan and vizier together more or less as equals, in the identical language used in a poem to Niẓām al-Mulk himself (p. 237, ll.5734–35), which has already been quoted:

> There are two miracles that accord with the well-being of the age,
> the sword in your hand and the pen in the Vizier's.
> It is fitting that God should have created no equal to you or to him
> from the men of the sword and the men of the pen …
> Through the *farr* of your fortune this blessed old man has today
> become young before your throne.
> You are the sun, and he sits before you like the full moon; it is a
> marvel that sun and moon should shine together.
> (p. 221, ll. 5369 ff./p. 220)

Malikshāh's victories are, naturally, the topic of most interest to his panegyrist. In one poem (pp. 191 ff./191), Mu'izzī summarises the campaigns of 'the last fifteen years'; he lists them in date order. The first is Kirmān, his only reference to Qāvurd's rebellion of 465–6/1072–3. The second is 'Tirmidh, the Chigil horsemen, and Khuttalān', the short war in 466/1073–4 against the Qarakhānids of Samarqand, who had seized Tirmidh and its hinterland after Alp Arslān's murder had forced Malikshāh to abandon the campaign in Transoxania. The next 'great cause for admiration' is Ganja,

Armenia and Arrān, which Mu'izzī does not mention anywhere else; Malikshāh campaigned in Georgia and Armenia in 471/1078–9, and returned to the Caucasus in 478/1085, probably after the death of his governor Savtigīn earlier in the year (CHIR V pp. 94–95). The passage that follows is an extremely brief summary of the Sultan's activities in Syria and the Jazīra during the years 477/1084–5 to 479/1086–7. There is a mysterious reference to 'what the edge of the sword did to the head of "Bilkavtan 'Uthmān"', whom the present writer has been unable to identify (there may be some textual corruption), and also to the capture of the fortress of Ja'bar and of Antioch and Harrān (ll.4594 ff.). The list ends with a total victory over 'the house, realm and army of the Khāqān', which must be the campaign of 482/1089, as a result of which the Qarakhānid khans of Samarqand and Kāshghar became vassals of the Seljuqs.

There are numerous references to Malikshāh's victories in 'Rūm and Shām'. 'Rūm' has been defined as 'the Greek lands of the Byzantine empire beyond the Taurus-upper Euphrates frontier zone' (EI[2] 'Rūm'), and in Malikshāh's reign it included a Greco–Armenian principality that controlled Malatya, Edessa, and Antioch (CHIR V p. 97). Malikshāh is represented as a *ghāzī*, whose aim should be to destroy the Byzantine empire and its Christian 'idol-temples' (p. 316/301; p. 479, ll.11297–98/p. 446). He has converted to Islam 'a seventy-year old infidel', again unidentified, and has made the corrupt house of heathendom like the Dār ul-Islām (p. 138, l.3145/p. 137). 'In three months he tamed Rūm and the Arabs; no one had ever dreamed such a thing could be done' (p. 499, l. 11734/p. 463). His victories were achieved without much bloodshed; he reformed and centralised the administration:

> One *pahlavān* of his rules what the enemy's amirs ruled in Syria; one amir rules what a hundred bold amirs ruled in Rūm.
> You conquered Syria with a threat, without war or battle; you took Rūm with one message, without sword or spear.
> (l. 11752)

In the course of these campaigns he crossed the Euphrates on horseback, without bridge or boat (p. 138). Mu'izzī may have witnessed some or part of these campaigns; he says he crossed 'the desert' (*bādiya*) to reach Malikshāh (p. 224, l.5438), and the details he gives do suggest that he may be speaking from personal knowledge. He says he has made a *dīvān* this year from the victories in Shām and Rūm, and speaks of a 'lion-hearted incomparable amir', yet again unidentified, high in favour with Malikshāh, who scattered largesse beside the Sultan's stirrup (ll.8468–69).

Malikshāh paid two visits to Baghdād, in Dhū'l-Ḥijja 479/March–April 1087, accompanied by Niẓām al-Mulk, and in 484/1091. Mu'izzī celebrates his return to Iṣfahān from the first visit after spending six months there,

performing many good works, hunting on the plains of Kūfa, Hīt, Madā'in and Tikrīt, and sitting on the bank of the Tigris with a wine-cup in his hand (p. 137/136). A marriage was arranged between the Caliph al-Muqtaḍī and Malikshāh's daughter, which took place the following year (IA X pp. 103–4, 106), and there are poems which emphasise the need for good relations between Sultan and Caliph: 'It is the duty of the whole world to pray for you, especially the people of Baghdād and the Commander of the Faithful' (p. 531, l. 12439/p. 490). Another poem describing this visit makes much of his popularity:

> It is the season of the 'Īd, the banks of the Tigris are joyful with the scent of sweet basil and the brightness of the goblets of ruby wine …
> Everyone has come to see the king of the Arabs and the king of the Persians.
>
> (pp. 479–80, ll. 11304 ff/p. 447)

A much more serious poem on the second visit (p. 524/483) praises the achievements of Malikshāh's 19 years rule and his devotion to Islam and the Caliphate.

> The soul of 'Abbās and the sons of 'Abbās in Paradise congratulate you on your justice in Baghdād.
> With your qualities, O king, Baghdād does not long for the days of Mu'tasim or the days of Musta'īn.
> The glory of the faith rests in you, and the glory of the faithful; this is why the Commander of the Faithful has sent you a new banner.
> For this reason he has ordered your name and title to be inscribed on the banner; the decoration of this banner is the ornament of empire and religion.
> He holds you as his right hand.

These are rather surprising lines in view of the bad relations between the two men at the time, after the collapse of the marriage of Malikshāh's daughter to the Caliph (IA X p. 116), and Malikshāh's apparent determination to expel the Caliph from Baghdād (CHIR V p. 101); Mu'izzī must presumably have been aware of these problems, but chose to ignore them.

The poems on the campaigns in Khurāsān and Transoxania are fewer in number and yield less information than the poems on the campaigns in the west. There was less activity in the east once the rebellious Tekesh had been removed from the scene in 477/1084, after Malikshāh's celebrated dash from Mosul in the middle of his operations in Syria. According to Mu'izzī, it took him 60 days to transport an army of 60,000 men to Khurāsān, and recover the fortress of Sarakhs seized by Tekesh (p. 272, ll.6559 ff). Of the two

campaigns against the Qarakhānids, the early one in 466/1073, which was essentially a punitive expedition, gets only a brief mention. The second one, however, which was much more far-reaching both in the distances involved and in its effects, inspired Mu'izzī to compose a long victory *qaṣīda*, in which he goes into considerable detail on some of the more striking events. As already noted, Mu'izzī was in Samarqand for at least part of the campaign, and was probably speaking from personal knowledge. After congratulating the Sultan on his crushing victory, and mocking the Qarakhānid prince Ya'qūb-tigīn for his cowardice, he lists the achievements of the campaign. Kasan in Farghāna, Uzkend and Samarqand, 'the treasure-houses of many a *khān* and *tigīn*', were occupied without a fight. He comments on the mixture of nationalities in the army. Since the days of Mu'tasim no one had had such an army; no one else had taken Turks, Daylamīs, Arabs and Greeks from Iṣfahān to Uzkend. The Sultan installed his own military and civil administrators in the areas now subject to him, as he had done in Syria:

> Who but you has made the fortresses and palaces of the Khāqānīs
> the place of amir and *ḥājib*, of *sālār* and *pahlavān*? …
> … In Kāshghar, through your presence, there is *shaḥna* and '*amīd*;
> in Khutan, by your hand, there is *valī* and *marzbān*.
> (pp. 553 ff., ll. 12893–95/p. 507)

By the late autumn of 485/1092, Mu'izzī was, to all appearances, in a very comfortable position, both professionally and financially. He was firmly established as Malikshāh's *amīr al-shu'arā'*, without rivals or competitors; he produced a steady flow of poems addressed to the Sultan, celebrating victorious campaigns, festivals, both religious and secular, and social occasions. He counted among his patrons many of Malikshāh's senior officials, the most important of whom were Nizam al-Mulk and his family. All seemed to be going well with Malikshāh's empire. The eastern frontier was peaceful; the Qarakhānids were now vassals of the Seljuqs, and the hard-headed Ibrahīm of Ghazna preferred to keep the peace with his powerful and restless neighbour. Malikshāh's decisive and final breach with the Caliph al-Muqtaḍī and his apparent intention to make Baghdād his winter capital seemed to herald a major change in the orientation of his empire and future military operations; but there is no hint at all of this in Mu'izzī's poetry. His happy and prosperous existence, however, was to come to a sudden and shattering end, first with the murder of Niẓām al-Mulk on 10 Ramaḍān, and then with the death of Malikshāh himself just over a month later. Mu'izzī was once more on his own.

5

MU‘IZZĪ

Biography, career and patrons, from 485/1092 to the end of Berkyārūq's reign (498/1105)

The totally unexpected death of Malikshāh in Baghdad on 16 Shawwāl 485/ mid-November 1092 (Ḥusainī 1933 p. 71) was both a major landmark in Mu‘izzī's life and a turning-point in the history of the Seljuq empire. The Sultan died in the prime of life, at a moment when he was about to embark on a course of action that would have shifted the axis of his empire westwards, making Baghdad his winter capital. Niẓām al-Mulk, Tāj al-Mulk and the great amirs had already begun to build themselves palaces in the city; but, as Ibn al-Athīr commented, ‘It was not long before their gathering was broken up by death and murder' (IA X p. 135). After nearly 350 years, Baghdad was no longer to be the seat of the ‘Abbāsid Caliphate; the Caliph was to be banished to Damascus, the Hijāz, or wherever he chose to make his residence (Bundārī 1889 pp. 62–63; Ibn al-Jauzī IX p. 62), and be replaced by his son, Malikshāh's grandson. The reasons for this were both strategic and personal. Malikshāh regarded his eastern frontier as secure. If he wished to extend his empire further, the obvious targets, from both the strategic and religious angles, were in the west: Egypt, rich and vulnerable, under its Ismā'īlī Fātimid rulers, and the Christian Byzantine empire. On the personal side, the collapse of the short-lived marriage between his daughter and the Caliph had led to a complete breach in relations between Sultan and Caliph. With Malikshāh's death, all these plans came to nothing, and the ferocious succession struggle between his sons and their partisans was to lead ultimately to the *de facto* partition of an empire that had been a unity under the first three Seljuq sultans.

A month previously, on 10 Ramaḍān, Niẓām al-Mulk had been murdered by an Ismā'īlī *fidā'ī* near Nihāvand, on the road from Iṣfahān to Baghdad, while he was travelling in Malikshāh's train to Iraq; he apparently still held the post of vizier in spite of his quarrel with the Sultan. Niẓām al-Mulk was in his seventies, in poor health, and probably not expected to live much longer; but the violence and suddenness of his death, the fact that it was the first ‘assassination', and the suspicion that it had been instigated by enemies in the bureaucracy and the royal family, created a profound shock that is

reflected both in the historical sources and in Mu'izzī's poetry. Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, for example, who took a strongly paradigmatic view of history, saw the murder as an omen of the approaching death of Malikshāh, and, by implication, as the fulfilment of Kundurī's prophecy to Niẓām al-Mulk just before his execution, that his rival had set an evil and dangerous precedent that would rebound on his own family (ZD pp. 33/51, 23/30–1).

The most circumstantial account of the murder is given by Ibn al-Athīr. Niẓām al-Mulk had left his tent, in a litter, to go to his wives' tent. A Daylamī youth, a Bāṭinī, followed him, ostensibly with a petition, stabbed him and fled, but fell over the tent-ropes and was caught and killed; according to some accounts, he had disguised himself as a Ṣūfī. The Sultan, having heard the news, rode up to reassure and calm Niẓām al-Mulk's entourage. Although Ibn al-Athīr does not accuse Malikshāh or Tāj al-Mulk of complicity in the crime, he attributes the murder to the quarrel, which he says was triggered off by a specific incident. Niẓām al-Mulk, without reference to Malikshāh, had appointed his grandson 'Uthmān b.Jamāl al-Mulk as *rā'īs* of Marv. 'Uthmān quarrelled with the *shaḥna* appointed by Malikshāh, the senior Amīr Qodūn, who complained to the Sultan. Malikshāh, in a letter to Niẓām al-Mulk, rebuked him for exceeding his powers and for failing to check the arrogance and greed of his sons; Niẓām al-Mulk's intransigent reply (IA X pp. 137–38) has already been quoted. Of the other sources, Bundārī's mention of the murder is brief and vague, without a precise date (p. 62). Ḥusainī, who gives the same date as Ibn al-Athīr (10 Ramaḍān), lays emphasis on the long-standing enmity between Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ and Niẓām al-Mulk, and says that the murderer was one of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's followers, but he ascribes the ultimate responsibility to Tāj al-Mulk and Malikshāh. Tāj al-Mulk had poisoned the Sultan's mind against Niẓām al-Mulk; Malikshāh wanted to dismiss him, but was afraid of the vizier's vast army of *ghulāms* (more than 20,000, according to Ḥusainī), and he and Tāj al-Mulk sent the Daylamī youth to kill him (pp. 66–67). The *Seljūk-nāma* presents Terken Khātūn as the chief figure in the campaign against Niẓām al-Mulk, and this seems to have been his own view (SN ch. 42). Tāj al-Mulk, acting as her agent, was in secret contact with the 'heretics' (*malāhida*) and arranged the murder; Malikshāh, however, knew nothing of it (ZD pp. 33/51). Whether or not these accusations were true, the subsequent fate of Tāj al-Mulk at the hands of the Niẓāmīyya shows that they were widely believed.

The sources vary somewhat on the interval between the deaths of Niẓām al-Mulk and Malikshāh. Bundārī gives it as 33 days, Ḥusainī as 36, and Ibn Khallikān as 35 (vol. I, p. 414). Ibn al-Athīr, however, gives it as 53, which contradicts his own dates as well as those of the other sources; either he or his source must have transposed the figures. Following Bundārī's account but with more detail, Ibn al-Athīr says that Malikshāh entered Baghdad on 28 Ramaḍān; he was welcomed by the Caliph's vizier, and then went off

hunting. He returned to Baghdad on 3 Shawwāl, stricken with what turned out to be a mortal illness. Ibn al-Athīr, in unusually picturesque phraseology, says: 'Death had fastened its talons in him, and neither the vastness of his realm nor the number of his soldiers could hold it at bay' (IA X p. 141). There is no suggestion in any of the major sources that his death was other than natural, and it seems to have been the result of food-poisoning, or perhaps typhoid. Nevertheless, the suddenness of his death gave rise to rumours that he had been poisoned; according to the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh* (p. 408), '*gūyand dārū dādand-ash*', and Ibn Funduq (p. 478) was of the same opinion: '*pas az zahr dādan u marg-i Sultān Malikshāh* [after the poisoning and death of Sultan Malikshah]'. Ghazālī, writing to Sanjar nearly 20 years after Malikshāh's death, says that he spent 20 years in Iṣfahān and Baghdad during the reign of 'the martyr [*shahīd*] Sultan', enjoying good fortune and several times acting as a messenger between the Sultan and the Caliph on important business (*Faḍā'il al-anām* p. 4). He must, of course, be referring to Malikshāh, and his use of the word '*shahīd*' suggests that he thought the Sultan had been murdered. Ghazālī was in Baghdad at the time of Malikshāh's death, and acted as an intermediary between the Caliph and Terken Khātūn in the question of the recognition of her young son Maḥmūd as Malikshāh's successor; he would have been familiar with the rumours that were circulating (IA X p. 145).

Ghazālī and Mu'izzī are the only surviving sources contemporary with the reign of Malikshāh, though 'Imād al-Dīn/Bundārī's information on this period is derived from another near-contemporary source, the lost memoirs of the vizier Anūshīrvān b.Khḥālid. The historians, all writing in the following century or later, seem to be agreed that there was some degree of anxiety and discontent among the bureaucracy at least over the Sultan's activities and his judgment in the final years of his reign, associated with the decline in Niẓām al-Mulk's influence. Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī reports on the Sultan's order that all officials of the *dīvāns* who were old should be replaced by younger men, and comments: 'This too did not turn out well for him; it is in no way fitting that a ruler should injure [*āzardan*] his old servants and deprive them of rank and dignity'. The examples he gives and the satirical lines by Abū'l-Ma'ālī Najāshī that he quotes suggest that the new men were seen as poor substitutes for their predecessors (ZD pp. 33–4/51–2). Bundārī is concerned with the moral and psychological effect of the two deaths; when Niẓām al-Mulk was buried, 'generosity, virtue and religion were buried in his grave', and Malikshāh's death dealt a mortal blow to his realm. Both he and Ibn al-Jauzī express implicit disapproval of the brutality of Malikshāh's ultimatum to the Caliph (Bundārī 1889 pp. 62–63, 70; Ibn al-Jauzī IX p. 62).

Mu'izzī wrote two, possibly three, poems which, whilst conveying a feeling of genuine personal grief, clearly reflect the general sense of shock, sorrow and foreboding arising from the deaths of the Vizier and the Sultan in so short a space of time. The first is a fine *marthīya* on Niẓām

al-Mulk (pp. 476–7/443–4), apparently composed very soon after his murder, as it does not mention Malikshāh’s death and even suggests that he was one of the mourners: ‘Your death has drawn a circle of lamentation [*pargār-i shīvan*] in the kingdom; all men [*anām*] are in it and so is the king of all men [*shāh-i anām*]’ (l. 11233). With much verbal and dramatic skill, making use of the meaning of the Vizier’s titles, Mu‘izzī expresses incredulity that he should be dead:

> How can one say that the realm of the King of Kings is without order [*nizām*]? How can one say that the religion of the Prophet is without support [*qivām*]?
> How can one say that the chief of viziers has gone below the earth? How can one say that the moon of the earth has gone into the clouds? …
> He has become the world’s prey, who made the world his prey; he has become the quarry of the enemy, who saw the enemy as his quarry.
> On the road to Baghdad the fatal hunter [*sayyād-i ajall*] laid the trap; many a venerable and mighty prey has fallen into his trap.
> (ll. 11217 ff.)

He was unique both as soldier and scholar: ‘No cypress has grown as tall as you in the garden of victory; no full moon has shone as brightly as you in the firmament of learning’ (l. 11230). The last line of the poem voices the poet’s own feelings: ‘The hand of grief tore Mu‘izzī’s clothes of patience when he consoled the world: he is alive, and not sleeping [*hāyy lā yanām*]’ (l. 11242).

A second poem, entitled in the rubric ‘Lament for the murder of the Khwāja’ (pp. 406–7/380–1) seems to be an immediate, violently emotional reaction to the murder of an unnamed minister, apparently on a journey; but the text is somewhat confused, and it is not certain that Mu‘izzī is speaking of Niẓām al-Mulk. The last of these three poems, and the most famous, is the joint *marthīya* on Malikshāh and Niẓām al-Mulk, which contains Mu‘izzī’s most quoted line: ‘*raft dar yak māh ba fīrdaus-i barīn dastūr-i pīr, shāh-i burnā az pīsh-i ū raft dar māh-i dīga’r* (p. 405, l. 9550/p. 379). As in the *marthīya* on Niẓām al-Mulk, the first lines express horror and disbelief at the extent of the calamity that has befallen the realm: ‘No man of intelligence could have imagined these disasters, no man of learning could have conceived of these events. … Alas for such a king and such a vizier, who left the world suddenly, with that beauty and *farr*!’ (p. 405, ll. 9552, 9554/p. 379). The rest of the poem is devoted solely to Malikshāh, the immense wave of grief at his death (‘from Antioch to Kāshghar’) and the fear for the future now that his just and firm rule has ended. ‘The kingdom was always secure under his rule; security has come to an end with his life. While he lived, the

world dwelt in paradise; now, with his death, it dwells in hell' (ll. 9562–63). There are some echoes of Farrukhī's *marthīya* on Maḥmūd. A direct appeal is made to the Sultan to rouse himself from sleep, whether natural or drink-induced (l. 9571, cf. Farrukhī, *Dīvān* p. 3, ll. 10 ff.), and there is only a brief and veiled mention of a successor: 'That lord who, at the beginning of the reign, put you on the throne in your father's place, has made your throne your son's' (p. 406, l. 9586). This may be a reference to Berkyārūq, the candidate favoured by Niẓām al-Mulk, but may also be deliberately vague, as in Farrukhī's poem. Mu'izzī ends his poem with personal touches:

> You have gone, and have left me with tears for you in my eyes, so that when I sing your praises pearls rain down …
> You increased my fame and livelihood [*nām u nān*] and instructed me to versify your conquests in concise language [*lafẓ-i mukhtasar*].
> …
> The poet with the takhallus of Mu'izzī, in prayer beside you, has laid his face on [your] dust, like a pilgrim before the Stone.
> (l. 9590)

Another poem (pp. 467–9/435–7) that must have been written at about the same time is a panegyric combined with condolences to Fakhr al-Mulk, the eldest son of Niẓām al-Mulk, who was already a patron of Mu'izzī and was to be the recipient of more poems than any other patron but Malikshāh and Sanjar. Mu'izzī uses phraseology similar to that of his *marthīya* on Niẓām al-Mulk, and the same *radīf-ām*, but not the same metre. He omits the usual *nasīb* and begins by thanking God that Fakhr al-Mulk, whom he addresses as *Sadr* and *Amīr*, is there to take his rightful place as head of the bereaved family. As he was to do in many other poems, he makes much play with the meaning of Fakhr al-Mulk's *kunya* and personal name (Abū'l-Fatḥ Muẓaffar) and their implication of success in war, and he praises his resemblance to his father in generosity and justice. A passage of condolence follows, on similar lines to a conventional *marthīya*.

> The Sayyid al-Wuzarā' has gone, and you remain. We grieve for him who is gone, and rejoice for him who remains.
> Much prey of all kinds has fallen into the snare of doom [*dām-i ajall*]; a prey like the Sayyid al-Wuzarā' has not [before] fallen into its snare.
> Order [*nizām*] in the world was due to the life of Niẓām; Niẓām has gone from the world and has taken order from the world.
> The pen in his hand did the work of the sword, and now the realm without the sword [probably a reference to the death of Malikshāh] is without his pen.
> (ll. 11029 ff.)

The poem ends with a passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl,* on the amount of poetry Mu'izzī has written for Fakhr al-Mulk:

> Sometimes I recited panegyrics to you from morning to night;
> sometimes I sang your praises night and morning.
> Sometimes mention of you and praise of you have been the *takbīr* in
> my prayers and the *tasbīḥ* [rosary] in the fast.

For Mu'izzī, Malikshāh's death was a personal catastrophe, robbing him of his chief patron, and a secure, comfortable livelihood. Although he had highly placed and influential patrons among senior officials, notably the family of Niẓām al-Mulk, his hopes of further patronage and the sense of his own dignity as *amīr al-shu'arā'*, often expressed in his poems, made it very desirable for him to find another royal patron as soon as possible. As he must have been aware, the immediate prospects were poor. Malikshāh's surviving sons were all children; there was no official *valī-'ahd*, it was not the custom of the Seljuqs to accept the undisputed right of succession of the eldest son, and a succession struggle between the sons and their partisans, and the intervention of some of Malikshāh's brothers, seemed inevitable. Berkyārūq, the eldest son of Malikshāh, by his cousin Zubayda Khātūn, was 12 or 13, and was the preferred choice of Niẓām al-Mulk and his followers, and probably of the Sultan himself. He had an immediate rival in Maḥmūd, the five-year-old son of Terken Khātūn, whose determination to ensure the succession for him had been a considerable factor in Malikshāh's breach with Niẓām al-Mulk. The Caliph al-Muqtaḍī was pressured into including Maḥmūd's name in the *khuṭba*, and he was installed as sultan in Iṣfahān; but he died from smallpox in 487/1094. Berkyārūq's right to the throne was then challenged by another half-brother, Muḥammad, supported by his full brother Sanjar, the sons of the slave wife Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, who were eleven and eight respectively at the time of their father's death (ZD pp. 43/78; IA X p. 91). In their middle and late teens they embarked on bitter and destructive warfare with Berkyārūq, which continued for most of his reign. Peace was made in 497/1104, but Berkyārūq died a year later at the age of 25.

Two of Malikshāh's brothers had also laid claim to the whole or part of his realm. The most far-reaching attempt was made by Tutush, the ruler of Damascus, who claimed the sultanate in Baghdad in 486/1093. He invaded the Jazīra and western Iran and occupied Rayy, but in 488/1095 he was defeated by Berkyārūq's forces near Rayy and killed (IA X 165–66; Ḥusainī 1933 p. 76). However, the prince whose activities were of most consequence to Mu'izzī was the little-known Arslān Arghū, one of Alp Arslān's youngest sons (according to Ḥusainī 1933 [p. 86], he was only 26 when he was killed in 490/1097). Arslān Arghū was with Malikshāh when he died; he then left for Ḥamadān, where he had an *iqṭā'* worth 7000 dinars, and in 486/1093 made his way to Khurāsān, with the intention of establishing himself as its

ruler. After an unsuccessful attempt to take Nīshāpūr, he moved on to Marv, where the *shaḥna* Amīr Qodūn and the soldiers welcomed him; he extended his domains to include Balkh, which had been abandoned by its governor Fakhr al-Mulk, Tirmidh, and most of the rest of Khurāsān, with Nīshāpūr. Now in a very strong position, he wrote to Berkyārūq and his vizier Mu'ayyid al-Mulk b.Niẓām al-Mulk, demanding that Khurāsān should be formally assigned to him, as it had been to his grandfather Chaghrī Beg Dā'ūd. Berkyārūq, involved in warfare, did not reply; Mu'ayyid al-Mulk had been replaced, nominally by his brother Fakhr al-Mulk, but in effect by the *mustaufī* Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, with whom Arslān Arghū refused to have any dealings.

Berkyārūq's reaction was to send an army to drive Arslān Arghū out of Khurāsān, under the command of another uncle, Būrī-Bārs b.Alp Arslān, who had been appointed governor of Herāt, Gharchistān and Ghūr by Malikshāh in 466/1073 (Ḥusainī 1933 p. 59). He was accompanied by his vizier 'Imād al-Mulk, yet another son of Niẓām al-Mulk, to whom Mu'izzī had written three short poems during Malikshāh's lifetime, congratulating him on being chosen as one of the Sultan's *nadīms* (p. 190), and mentioning his contacts with the Shār, the local ruler of Gharchistān (p. 360, ll. 8498 ff./ p. 337). Būrī-Bārs at first achieved some success, including the capture of Marv; but in 488/1095 he was defeated and captured, and, after a year's imprisonment in Tirmidh, was strangled. 'Imād al-Mulk was mulcted of 300,000 dinars and then executed, and a number of senior military men in Khurāsān whom Arslān Arghū had reason to fear were also killed. In 489/ 1096, he ordered the destruction of the walls and fortifications of several Khurāsānī cities, including Sabzavār, Marv, Sarakhs and Nīshāpūr. His career came to an end early in 490/1097, when his harsh treatment of his *ghulāms* led to his murder by one of them in Marv 'to rescue the people from his tyranny' (Ḥusainī 1933 pp. 84–87; IA X pp. 178–79).

This brutal and unpromising character was the recipient of 11 poems by Mu'izzī, which are notable for their lyrical *nasībs*, technical skill and large number of literary allusions, and which will be discussed in more detail later. It appears that after the death of Malikshāh and a period of mourning, during which the *marthīya*s may have been composed, Mu'izzī left Iṣfahān for his native Nīshāpūr, awaiting the outcome of the succession struggle and hoping to find patronage in Khurāsān. The unexpected advent of Arslān Arghū provided him with the royal patron he needed. It is clear from the content of these poems that they were all composed after Arslān Arghū's arrival in Khurāsān, and Mu'izzī addresses him in terms which suggest that, whether seriously or in flattery, he saw Arslān Arghū as the independent ruler of Khurāsān and even as a contender for the sultanate. Much emphasis is laid on his likeness to his forebears and his inborn right to rule. No memorial of Chaghrī Beg, Malikshāh or Alp Arslān is like him (p. 89, 1. 1828/p. 88). He is the Shadow of God, the sun of his family (p. 214, 1. 5173/

p. 213), the head of the Seljuqs (*sar-i Saljūqīyān*) (p. 219, 1.5291/p. 218), the *malik* who sits in the place of his father, grandfather and brother, the central pearl in the collar of the race of Seljuq (p. 339, ll. 8028–29/p. 321). He has a legitimate claim to the sultanate: 'May your name and *laqab*, in world-rule and kingship, be in the *khuṭba*, on the coinage, in history and in poetry' (p. 340, 1. 8055/p. 322). It is *ḥaram* to oppose him, as he is his father's rightful heir [*mirās-i ḥalāl*] (p. 440, 1. 10368/p. 411). There is the prospect of caliphal recognition, whether realistic or not: 'Wait until the Commander of the Faithful prepares a robe and crown and banner for him, and calls him *ṣāḥib-qīrān* ['lord of the happy conjunction]', a title that Mu'izzī uses exclusively of reigning sultans (p. 672, 1. 15520/p. 608). Much praise is lavished on the justice and firmness of Arslān Arghū's rule, and on what he has achieved in a short space of time (he was in Khurāsān for less than five years), outdoing any of his predecessors.

> For a time the house of Sāmān ruled Khurāsān, after them the Shāh of Kābul and Kābulistān [i.e. Maḥmūd of Ghazna]; none of them did what you have done in the last two years, read their histories.
> (p. 672, l.15530/p. 608)

What no king could do in the course of 30 years he, through valour and skill, has achieved in three years (p. 441, l. 10375/p. 411). Khurāsān is secure and at peace:

> Your sword has cleared Khurāsān from enemies and oppressors.
> Your justice is such that if a traveller with a load of gold and jewels should halt in the desert,
> No one, even in the dead of night, would be bold enough to lay a finger on it.
> (p. 340, ll. 8043–45/p. 322)

> Under your rule Khurāsān is like a strong castle; the shadow of your commands is like a moat round the castle.
> Its foundations come from your justice, its walls from your sword; the walls are high, the foundation firm.
> (p. 215, ll. 5190–91/p. 214)

The poem appears to have been written in 489/1096, and these lines may be an indirect justification of the destruction of city walls and forts in that year. The only reference to a specific historical event in these poems is to the recapture of Marv from Būrī-Bārs's forces (p. 525, l. 12300/p.484). It is difficult to reconcile Mu'izzī's praise of Arslān Arghū's virtues, conventional though this is in panegyric poetry, with the accounts of the historians, which suggest that, after a promising beginning, he descended into the increasingly

uncontrolled violence that was to bring about his death. Mu'izzī may have accepted Arslān Arghū's brutality as the price of stability in Khurāsān, or may even have been unaware of it; it is not clear how well he knew Arslān Arghū or how often he was in his company. Most of the poems to him seem to have been composed for festivals, especially Naurūz and Mihragān, and, charming though they are, there is little sense of personal involvement and a notable lack of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*.

In 490/1097, Berkyārūq, having disposed of Tutush, made a second and much more determined effort to establish his authority in Khurāsān. He sent Sanjar ahead with an army and Amīr Qumāj, one of the most senior of Malikshāh's amirs, as his *atabeg*, and Mujīr al-Daula Abū'l-Fatḥ 'Alī b. Ḥusayn Ardistānī, surnamed al-Ṭughrā'ī, as his vizier. He himself followed with more troops. The news of the murder of Arslān Arghū reached his party when they arrived in Dāmghān; they moved on to Nīshāpūr in Jumāda II 490/April 1097, and took the city and the province of Khurāsān without a fight. Berkyārūq then proceeded to Balkh and Tirmidh, and the *khuṭba* was read in his name in Samarqand and other cities of Transoxania (IA X p. 180). Meanwhile, Sanjar and his forces dealt rapidly and effectively with another Seljuq pretender, Muḥammad b.Sulaymān b.Chaghrī Beg Dā'ūd, known as Amīr-i Amīrān, who had obtained help from Sultan Ibrāhīm of Ghazna in return for acknowledging his suzerainty (IA X p. 181). Berkyārūq returned to Balkh and spent seven months there, the only time in his reign that he was in Khurāsān; most of the eight poems Mu'izzī addressed to him were probably composed during this period. Before leaving Balkh for Iraq, Berkyārūq appointed Sanjar *malik* of Khurāsān (ZD pp. 38, 60–61). Khurāsān, with Marv as his capital, was to be Sanjar's base and the heartland of his power for the next 60 years, and after Berkyārūq's departure Mu'izzī transferred his allegiance to Sanjar. Khurāsān was his home and it seems that he had no intention of ever leaving it again; whoever ruled Khurāsān would be the chief object of his devotion, and Sanjar's continuing presence in Khurāsān was to provide him with the stability he sought for the rest of his life.

Mu'izzī's poems to Berkyārūq are in several ways similar to his poems to Arslān Arghū. They contain light-hearted and graceful *nasīb*s, suitable for a young prince, including a lively celebration, much in Farrukhī's style, of the end of Ramaḍān and the return of secular pleasures (p. 346, ll. 8184 ff./ p. 327). There is emphasis on his Seljuq descent on both sides and his legitimacy, a number of references to *Shāhnāma* characters though none to earlier poets, and warm congratulations on rescuing Khurāsān from oppression and misgovernment. The earth had been dry and ruined for four years (that is, since Arslān Arghū's arrival); Berkyārūq is like the rain-cloud sent from God, and his arrival in the spring has brought back the jewel-like richness of the flowers of Naurūz (p. 340, ll. 8082 ff./p. 322). There is considerably more historical content than in the poems to Arslān Arghū. Berkyārūq is several

times addressed as Rukn al-Dīn and Burhān Amīr al-Mu'minīn, titles that were given to him in 487/1094 by the Caliph al-Muqtaḍī, and confirmed by his successor al-Mustaẓhir (IA X p. 155). There are also two mentions of a festival otherwise unrecorded in Mu'izzī's poetry, the *sāl-gardish* or anniversary of his accession (*jashn-i sāl-gardish-i sultān-i ruzgār*, p. 344, l. 8135/ p. 325, and p. 577, l. 1346/p. 528), which is equated with the spring festival. It seems that Berkyārūq's accession was calculated not from the death of Malikshāh but from the reading of the *khuṭba* in Baghdad in his name, instead of the name of his young brother Maḥmūd, coupled with the granting of the caliphal titles mentioned earlier, which Ibn al-Athīr, without giving an exact date, records (IA X p. 155) as the first event of the year 487 (21 January 1094–10 January 1095). The recapture of Khurāsān is described in general terms. Berkyārūq took his victorious army from Iran to Tūrān, the Khāqān paid tribute, and the defeated enemies (presumably the partisans of Amīr-i Amīrān) fled to Ghazna and to Kirmān, possibly a reference to the help given by Irānshāh, the ruler of Kirmān, to the Shabānkāra Kurds who invaded Fārs in 490/1097 (IA X p. 192).

In the same poem (pp. 344 ff.), Mu'izzī refers clearly, though discreetly, to the attempts by Berkyārūq's uncles to seize his heritage, and, by implication, disavows his own support for Arslān Arghū. 'When Malikshāh departed from his family [*tabār*] a group of the family sought the kingdom. It was not God's will that one of them should be chosen; no one should succeed the father except the son' (p. 344, ll. 8147–48/p. 325). The poem on the troubles of Khurāsān already mentioned (p. 340/322) ends with a personal touch:

> O King, those who are famous in this realm know that I was well-known and dear to Malik Sultan,
> For years I did service to him, I sang his praises in autumn and in spring.
> Now that he has left the world, may God be merciful to him, and may the Prophet intercede for him on the day of reckoning.
> May his exalted soul in Paradise be pleased with you, and may the world rejoice in you as he does in Paradise.
> (ll. 8090 ff.)

The most striking poem of this group (pp. 579/530) can almost certainly be dated to 'Īd al-Fiṭr 491/September 1098, following the first major success of the Crusaders, the capture of Antioch in 491/June 1098. It is strongly Islamic and anti-Christian in tone, contrasting the religious intolerance of the Crusaders with the tolerance shown to Christians by Berkyārūq's Muslim subjects:

> For the sake of the Arab religion [*az bahr-i millat-i tāzī*] it is a duty, O ghāzī king,

To clear the country of Syria from patriarchs and bishops, to clear the land of Rūm from priests and monks.
You should kill those accursed dogs and wretched creatures, the wolves who have sharpened their teeth and claws.
You should take the Franks prisoner and cut their throats, with jewelled, life-devouring blood-spurting daggers.
You should make polo-balls of the Franks' heads in the desert, and polo-sticks from their hands and feet.
In this country, through your fortune, no one says an evil word of Jesus or Mary.

(ll. 13496 ff.)

This tirade was probably inspired by the siege of Antioch by the Crusaders from 490/1097 to 491/1098. Earlier in the year, the Caliph al-Mustaẓhir had written to Berkyārūq urging him to fight the Crusaders and prevent their power from growing any greater and, according to Ibn al-Jauzī, Berkyārūq wrote to various amirs in Rabi' II 491/March 1098, urging them to fight the unbelievers; but nothing was done, even after the fall of Jerusalem in the following year. The Great Seljuqs were too much occupied with their own internal conflicts (Ibn al-Jauzī IX pp. 105, 108).

At this point, some five years after Malikshāh's death, and before Mu'izzī was established as Sanjar's chief court poet, it seems appropriate to list and discuss some of his more notable minor patrons during this unsettled period of his life, which probably lasted for most of Berkyārūq's reign. His poems to three of his more important patrons, Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī and Mujīr al-Daula Ardistānī, will then be considered, and the chapter will conclude with a summary of what has been learnt from his poems about his life and activities during these years. The discussion of his poems to Sanjar and his mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, to Fakhr al-Mulk and other members of the family of Niẓām al-Mulk, and to various notables to whom he wrote poems during the last part of his life, will be postponed to the following chapter. One of the frustrating but fascinating aspects of this enormous *dīvān*, composed over a period of more than 50 years, is that the names of a number of patrons occur only once or twice, and as Mu'izzī, like Farrukhī and Manūchihrī before him, by no means always includes the patron's full name and titles in the *gurīzgāh*, it has been difficult, and in some cases impossible, to identify them. The lavish distribution of titles under the Seljuqs, so much disapproved of by Niẓām al-Mulk (SN ch. 40), complicates matters, as does the use of the word 'Amīr', a title that was given to senior Turkish military officers, and also to young sons of prominent families in the bureaucracy like Fakhr al-Mulk and Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, either as an honorific, or because they held a post with military responsibilities or had their own troops. On the rare occasions when Mu'izzī addresses poems to Turkish officers he usually gives them both their Islamic

names and titles and the Turkish names by which they are generally known to the historians; but when he omits the name and gives only the Islamic title, identification can be problematic.

Most of the poems now to be discussed fall into this low frequency category. In a *dīvān* of this size there is naturally a good deal of variety in the quality of the poems and, where they are of no particular merit, little effort has been made to identify the *mamdūḥ*; but in cases where the poem is of literary or historical interest the patron's identity has been investigated as far as possible. The *mamdūḥs* of these poems have, for the sake of convenience, been divided into three groups. The first and largest consists of high-ranking Khurāsānī officials, other men apparently of distinction whose rank or position is not made clear but who have some connection with Khurāsān or Nīshāpūr, and visiting dignitaries temporarily resident in Khurāsān; this group, for reasons that will become clear, has been extended to include Mu'izzī's only known Ismā'īlī patron, the Amīr of Ṭabas, Ismā'īl Gīlākī (not Kalkali as in CHIR V, p. 137). The second group has been somewhat arbitrarily put together from *mamdūḥs* with western connections, including Mu'izzī's only poem to the future sultan Muḥammad, and to an unnamed Caliph; these poems belong to a later period. The third and smallest group is chiefly linked by its connection with Khwārazm; a poem to the vizier of Kirmān has been included in this group.

The question of dating also applies to the Khurāsānī group, but as Mu'izzī must have spent much of his life in Marv rather than Nīshāpūr once he became part of Sanjar's court entourage, it has seemed justifiable to deal here with poems to patrons whose connections were with Nīshāpūr or Khurāsānī cities other than Marv; these poems, with their references to disorder and trouble in Khurāsān, probably belong to Berkyārūq's reign. The first of this group is a singleton, Mu'izzī's only poem to the '*amīd* of Nīshāpūr, Mushayyad al-Mulk Mas'ūd b.Muḥammad b.Manṣūr (p. 367/345), whose father, Muḥammad b.Manṣūr, had been '*amīd* of Khurāsān (Bulliet 1973 pp. 126, 157, 253). The *nasīb*, with its description of the beauties of the spring garden, suggests that the poem was written for Naurūz, and probably soon after the patron's appointment. 'In the hand of the nobleman of Khurāsān is his diploma [*manshūr*] as '*amīd* of Nīshāpūr' (p. 368, l. 8670). There is a strong hint of recent unrest in the city, perhaps a reference to the violent factional rioting recorded by Ibn al-Athīr for the year 488/1094, during Arslān Arghū's reign in Khurāsān; this followed the siege of the city by an unnamed *amīr al-'umarā'*, apparently in search of plunder (IA X p. 171). 'Your writ must run in this city, so that no man becomes proud and insolent; when there is no queen the swarm of bees becomes rebellious' (l. 8673).

The second patron in this group is an unknown, Sadīd al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ẓahīrī or Ẓuhayrī, the *mamdūḥ* of two and probably three poems (pp. 365/344, 459/428, 45/52). Mu'izzī gives him the additional titles of Musharraf al-Mulk, Wajīh-i Daulat and Shams al-Sharaf, and addresses

him in terms that suggest he may have been ‘*amīd* of Balkh. ‘Go to Balkh and look at his palace if you want to see the dome of Kisra (i.e. Ctesiphon) in the dome of Islam (p. 460, ll. 10831 ff.). (Qubbat al-Islām was a name given to Balkh, as well as to Baṣra [*Lughat-nāma*].) He is on excellent terms with his (*sic*) amir ‘Izz al-Dīn, possibly the *shaḥna* of Balkh, who has reason to be grateful to him, and his influence in Khurāsān has been beneficial: ‘Although the affairs of ‘Irāq are now in disorder, the affairs of Khurāsān have been put in order through your endeavours’ (l. 10847). His *kunya* Abū Bakr, the title of Shams al-Sharaf, and the mention of ‘Izz al-Dīn, all strongly suggest that he is also the *mamdūḥ* of a multi-voice panegyric (p. 45/52), almost unique in Mu‘izzī’s *dīvān* (EI2 ‘Mu‘izzī’), addressed to Abū Bakr Shams al-Sharaf. One of the speakers is an ‘Izz al-Dīn, who refers to Abū Bakr as his vizier and *dastūr* in the time of Malik Sanjar (p. 48, ll. 889–95) and attributes his own success in war and in peace to Abū Bakr’s good judgment, very much as in p. 459. Both the poems to Sadīd al-Dīn by name suggest that he was a connoisseur of poetry and was the patron of other poets beside Mu‘izzī (p. 365, l. 8346): they are skilful and light-hearted, the one (p. 365) with an erotic *nasīb* in which the lover is Khusrau and the beloved (the *shīrīn pisar*) is Shīrīn, and the other with a *nasīb* celebrating the end of Ramaḍān: ‘The people who spent their days in the mosque now spend them in the tavern’ (p. 459, l. 18105). This seems to be in keeping with the Abū Bakr of the multi-voice *qaṣīda*.

Much more is known about the third *mamdūḥ*, Tāj al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Mānī’ī b.Mas‘ūd b.Mānī’ī, a member of a famous Nīshāpūrī family, whose grandfather, Abū ‘Alī Ḥasan al-Mānī’ī (d.463/1070), had moved from Marv al-Rūd to Nīshāpūr in about the middle of the fourth/eleventh century. He had become *rā’īs* of the city, and was renowned both for his learning and his charitable benefactions, which included the Mānī’ī mosque and library. According to Mu‘izzī, Tāj al-Dīn’s father Mas‘ūd b. Mānī’ī had been a patron of ‘Asjadī ‘in the days of Chaghrī (Beg) and Maudūd (of Ghazna)’, that is, from *c.*432/1041 to 440/1048/9 (p. 134, l. 3067). Tāj al-Dīn himself was a well-known *faqīh* of Nīshāpūr, and was *rā’īs* of Khurāsān (Lambton 1988 p. 317). The three poems Mu‘izzī wrote to him seem to date from different periods of his life. In the first two (pp. 19/32, 27/38), he is addressed as ‘amir’, and there is talk of a victory through which his family has gained honour and glory (p. 20, ll. 332–36). The city of Nīshāpūr has benefited from his justice and supervision: ‘O inhabitants of Nīshāpūr, pray that his retinue [*ḥashamat*] may always be there; if your city did not have his retinue, it would lack much splendour and much power’ (l. 340). He is a generous patron:

> Though I am the servant of kings and a master of speech [*ustād-i sukhan*], and though I am the panegyrist of great men, and am *amīr-i shu’arā’*,

> I've found no patron in the world better than him, who gives 3,000 dinars for three poems.
>
> (ll. 353–54)

In the second poem there is more on his generosity and justice: 'There is no just ruler to compare with you in Baghdad and Rayy and Qum and Iṣfahān' (l. 532). The occasion for the poem seems to have been the visit of one 'Ain al-Daula to Nīshāpūr as an official guest of the 'ministers' (*ṣudūr*) and the notables (l. 518). Iqbāl suggests that this was the recently appointed Khwārazmshāh Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b.Anūshtigīn (ruled 492–521/ 1097–1127), who is twice given the title of 'Ain al-Daula by Bundārī; the date of the poem, however, is uncertain (Iqbāl 1972; Bundārī 1889 pp. 165, 170).

A passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* towards the end of the third poem (pp. 134–6/133–4) suggests that it was written after a lapse of some years. The patron is no longer addressed as '*amīr*', but as *rā'īs* and *ṣadr* of Khurāsān. There are hints of local and personal difficulties, arising from unrest (*fitna*) caused by famine and intrigues against him by people envious of his wealth and position. This may be an oblique reference to a two-year shortage of food in Khurāsān after crop failure caused by cold weather and a subsequent epidemic, which Ibn al-Athīr records under the year 492/1098–9 (IA X pp. 197–98). With regard to Tāj al-Dīn's personal troubles, he may be the Abū Muḥammad named by Ibn al-Athīr as '*amīd* (not *rā'īs*) of Khurāsān, who was among the leading men of Nīshāpūr who were expelled from the city or arrested and detained on Berkyārūq's orders, when he came to Nīshāpūr in 493/1099–1100 to seek support from Ḥabashī, the *de facto* governor of western Khurāsān (IA X p. 201). Nothing but their names is known of two other patrons. Bahā' al-Dīn Zayn al-Mulk Abū 'Alī Khutanī (p. 450/420) is described as 'the unique pride of Khurāsān' (l. 10612) in a poem full of textual problems. Jamāl al-Daula Muḥammad was evidently an elderly man, as he had been in a position of power for 50 years (l. 10986). It seems that he had returned to Nīshāpūr after a period of exile, possibly the result of accusations of dishonesty; Mu'izzī says his exile was a severe blow to the city (ll. 10988 ff.).

The first of the 'transients' is Amīr Sayf al-Daula Shams al-Dīn (p. 510/472). He had been high in favour with Malikshāh, and under Berkyārūq was the *sipāhsālār* of two armies (ll. 11875, 11879). Mu'izzī says he had come from Iraq, to make Khurāsān a paradise (l. 11871) when his banner was raised over Nīshāpūr (l. 11886). No personal names or other details are given. The poem is short and straightforward, a standard greeting to a visiting general, and probably dates from Berkyārūq's campaigns in Khurāsān in 490/1097 or 493/1099–1100. The second 'transient' is another of Malikshāh's generals, the Turk Amīrdād or Dād Beg Ḥabashī b.Altuntāq. During Malikshāh's reign, Mu'izzī had composed a short panegyric to the Sultan on the occasion of an entertainment given to him by Ḥabashī (p. 735/660). In 490/1097,

Berkyārūq despatched Ḥabashī to Khurāsān with an army to deal with two mutinous amirs, Qodūn the *shaḥna* of Marv who had welcomed Arslān Arghū, and his ally Yāruq-Tāsh, who had murdered the current Khwārazmshāh Ekīnchī b.Qochgar and seized the province of Khwārazm (IA X p. 189; Juvaynī II pp. 277–78; Marwazī p. 30). Ḥabashī made his base in Herāt, and, with additional forces, managed to defeat and capture the two amirs. Berkyārūq then appointed him Amīr of Khurāsān, with responsibility for Gurgān and Ṭabāristān, and apparently also gave him discretion to choose a new Khwārazmshāh, Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad, mentioned earlier (IA X pp. 181–82). Ḥabashī's position as Amīr of Khurāsān was obviously a potential source of conflict with Sanjar. Berkyārūq, however, urgently needed support in Khurāsān, and probably anticipated that if, as seemed likely, he became involved in warfare with Muḥammad, Sanjar would defect and ally himself with his full brother. Ḥabashī was resident in Dāmghān, on the western marches of Khurāsān, strategically well placed for keeping watch on Gurgān and Ṭabāristān, and commanding the main roads from Persian Iraq to Khurāsān and the north.

Ḥabashī was well-known as a patron of poets. According to Juvaynī, his chief panegyrist was Abū'l-Ma'ālī Naḥḥās al-Rāzī, who wrote poems to other Seljuq notables, including a Khwāja Abū'l-Fatḥ Muẓaffar who may have been Fakhr al-Mulk (Juvaynī II p. 5; de Blois 1992 pp. 250–51; 'Aufī 1957 pp. 410–14). The three poems Mu'izzī addressed to Ḥabashī, two of them for Naurūz (pp. 228/227, 230/229), have no indication of date but were probably written while he was in Khurāsān. They are pleasant but unremarkable, with no historical references; their claim to notice is that they contain two quotations from 'Unṣurī (*Dīvān* pp. 48, 88), and that they shed some light on Mu'izzī's personal circumstances at the time. He was evidently in some trouble; he speaks of having found consolation in praising Ḥabashī when 'unwillingly involved in a difficult service [*ba-jabr-i mahd giriftār-i khidmati dushvār*] and in troublesome business [*kārhā-yi nā-hamvār*]' (p. 232, ll. 5626–27). Iqbāl suggests that this was the service of Arslān Arghū (*Vizārat* p. 295). In this context, it may have been noticed that Mu'izzī often speaks as if he had written many more poems to a particular patron than appear in the *Dīvān*. There is, of course, no means of telling whether this is true, but it seems quite likely that not all his poems have been preserved.

It was probably through Ḥabashī that Mu'izzī obtained the patronage of the Amir of Ṭabas, who, as an Ismā'īlī, was a very unexpected patron for the panegyrist of the strongly Sunni Seljuq dynasty. Ḥabashī himself was not suspected of being an Ismā'īlī, but he had Ismā'īlī friends and contacts. The *rā'īs* Muẓaffar, the governor (*hākim*) of Dāmghān, was a long-standing family friend; he acted as Ḥabashī's deputy (*nā'ib*) and evidently had much influence over him. He persuaded Ḥabashī to ask Berkyārūq for the castle of Girdkūh, near Dāmghān, and was appointed as its governor. He spent much money on repairs to its walls and fortifications, and Ḥabashī's treasury was

lodged inside its walls. Ḥabashī was apparently unaware that Muẓaffar was a covert Ismā’īlī. He had been converted to Ismailism while living in Iṣfahān; after Ḥabashī's death, he 'came out' and for the next 40 years held Girdkūh as Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ's vassal (Juvaynī II pp. 670, 678–79). When Berkyārūq came to Ḥabashī in desperate need in 493/1099–1100, after being defeated by Muḥammad's forces near Ḥamadān, Ḥabashī was able to raise 20,000 horsemen for him, including 5,000 Ismā’īlīs. The most likely source for these troops was Ṭabas, though there is no direct evidence for this; but Quhistān, the province of which Ṭabas (Ṭabas-i Gīlākī) was the chief city, was a notorious Ismā’īlī stronghold, and it would appear that Ḥabashī was on good terms with its ruler. The ensuing battle with Sanjar's forces, who had invaded western Khurāsān from Balkh in support of Muḥammad, again ended in defeat for Berkyārūq. Ḥabashī fled from the battlefield, but was captured and killed by one of Sanjar's amirs. Berkyārūq's only success was the capture of Sanjar's mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, whom he used as a hostage to secure the release of prisoners (IA X pp. 201–2).

In the following year, 494/1101, Quhistān was invaded by Sanjar's *sipāh-sālār*, Bozgush, probably in retaliation for the Amīr's support of Berkyārūq. There was much destruction and loss of life; Ṭabas was besieged, most of its fortifications were destroyed, and it was only saved from capture by the payment of an enormous bribe to Bozgush. Another invasion three years later ended inconclusively (IA X pp. 221–22, 260). There is no mention of the Amir in all this; he was probably an old man, as will be seen, and he may have died before the attacks took place. The indisputable fact that Mu‘izzī, the laureate of Berkyārūq and Ḥabashī, addressed three substantial *qaṣīdas* and a *tarkīb-band*, a stanzaic type of poem of which there are only five examples in his *dīvān*, to Amīr Ismā’īl suggests that he was regarded by Ḥabashī at least as a valuable ally. Very little is known about Ḥusām al-Dīn 'Alā' al-Mulk Abū'l-Muẓaffar Shams al-Ma‘ālī Ismā’īl b.Muḥammad Gīlākī, apart from the information provided by Mu‘izzī. He seems to have had a taste for poems other than the standard panegyric *qaṣīda*. As we have seen, Mu‘izzī addressed one of his rare stanzaic poems to him, as did Jabalī (*c.*470–555/1077~8–1160), later a panegyrist of Sanjar. This, the only poem to Gīlākī in Jabalī's *dīvān* (vol. II pp. 647–55), is a 31-stanza *stasmīṭ* (similar to a *musammaṭ*) on the occasion of Naurūz; it contains no indication of date nor any historical details, but Jabalī apologizes for being unable to present it in person. Perhaps the most interesting of the poems dedicated to Gīlākī is the *Hunar-nāma* of the late Ghaznavid poet 'Uthmān Mukhtārī, a philosophical *maṣnavī* of nearly 500 *bayt*s, aimed at finding patrons at the courts of Ṭabas, Kirmān and Ghazna (de Bruijn 1983 p. 153).

Nāṣir-i Khusrau is the only source who mentions his father Amīr Abū'l-Ḥasan Gīlākī b.Muḥammad. In the *Ṣafar-nāma* he names Amīr Abū'l-Ḥasan as the ruler of one of four states, all apparently Ismā’īlī, which he says are remarkable for their security and justice. Nāṣir visited Quhistān on his return

journey, in the summer of 444/1052, and stayed in Ṭabas for 17 days as the guest of the Amīr, who gave him a present of money and an escort as far as Zauzan, a journey of 72 *farsakhs*. He says that Amīr Gīlākī had taken Ṭabas by the sword; he kept the desert roads free of the nomadic brigands who had previously infested the area, provided water-tanks, landmarks and shelter for travellers, and established such security that no one bothered to lock their doors at night. He was a stern disciplinarian; thieves were executed, and no woman dared on pain of death to speak to a man not her husband. In view of the friendly reception given to Nāṣir-i Khusrau and the subsequent history of Quhistān, it seems likely that he was making the visit in his capacity as an Ismā'īlī *dā'ī*. Ḥusayn Qā'inī, an emissary of Ḥasan-i Ṣabbāḥ, is usually credited with the conversion of Quhistān to Nizārī Ismailism in 484/1091–2, but he was building on foundations laid by many predecessors.

Nāṣir's visit to Quhistān had been made some 50 years earlier, when Amīr Gīlākī was a man of mature years. His son was now old; as Mu'izzī says, 'Through his power and dignity, he is in the place of a father to kings' (p. 383, l. 9012). Mu'izzī praises Amir Ismā'īl in much the same terms that Nāṣir-i Khusrau uses for the Amir's father. He rules the whole of Quhistān, which he took by force of arms (p. 756, verses 2 and 6/p. 677), and has established peace and security on the desert roads surrounding Ṭabas:

> His sword has made the desert like a male lion transformed into a doe gazelle.
> Traders go one after another through the desert; they pray to him for magic [*siḥr*] every night, for his justice has become the magic against the night of civil unrest [*fitna*].
>
> (p. 383, ll. 9007–8/p. 359)

> By his sword and his arm the land has been tamed, just as a wild colt is tamed by the whip.
>
> (p. 667, 1. 15403/p. 603)

He appears to have been of *dihqān* origin. He is compared with various *Shāhnāma* heroes (p. 667), and his evident liking for wine (two of the poems, pp. 125/124, 382/358, have *nasīb*s in praise of wine) is associated with *dihqāns*; wine is 'that jewel whose mine is the jar [*khumm*] of the [*dihqāns*]', and the 'fosterling [*parwardeh*] of the *dihqāns*' (p. 125/124).

The Amir is praised as a true and devout Muslim, like the Prophet in the light and clarity of his mind, like 'Alī in valour (p. 125, l. 2798). He is the sword (*husām*, a reference to his title of Ḥusām al-Dīn) 'by which, in the realm of Irān, the religion of the best of men has been renewed [*tāza shud*]' (p. 382, 1. 9001/p. 358), and people of religion know his praises by heart, like the *suras* (1.9005). Iqbāl suggests, very tentatively, that this indicates some sympathy with Ismā'īlī beliefs, but it seems to the present writer that the wording

is too non-committal to support this view. Like nearly all court poets, Mu‘izzī was in general very careful to express himself in a manner that was appropriate and pleasing to the patron without giving offence elsewhere, especially so when he was addressing an Ismā’īlī patron; the last thing he needed was to be branded as an Ismā’īlī sympathiser. The result of this caution is to make his poems sometimes difficult to interpret. On one subject, however, he was prepared to speak explicitly, his high opinion of his own qualities and standing as a poet, though this might be tempered by expressions of proper respect and gratitude to the patron.

> Because I have no equal in poetry, I hope for acceptance and favour from you.
>
> (p. 84, l. 9026)

> One *qaṣīda* of mine addressed to you is better than a hundred brilliant *qaṣīdas* [*qaṣīda-i gharrā*].
> And although inserting/quoting [*tadmīn*] someone else’s poetry in the middle of a panegyric is good, the daughters [*banāt*] of my thought are better than quotation.
>
> (p. 125, ll. 2822–24/p. 125)

All the same, the value of his poetry depends on its acceptability to the patron:

> My poetry will henceforth be accepted in the world because you applaud and delight in it.

He ends the poem with a mysterious reference to having to leave Amir Ismā’īl because he is under orders:

> I went to the royal court in virtue of an order [*farmān*] which the king of Chin and Machin adores [*ba-hukm-i farmān raftam ba-haḍrat-i malikī kī dar parastish-i ū shāh-i chīn u māchīn ast*].
> In longing for you the palace of my sweet [*shīrīn*] life is as ruined as the palace of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn.
>
> (ll. 2826–27)

The house of Gīlākī would be almost unknown to history if two of its members had not been eulogised in the works of four major Persian writers. Nothing more is recorded of the fate of the family.

Three of the five ‘western’ poems, to an unnamed caliph (p. 171/171), to Sultan Muḥammad b.Malikshāh (p. 581/531), and to Zayn al-Islām Abū Sa’d Muḥammad b.Naṣr b.Manṣūr, better-known as the Qādī Abū Sa’d al-Haravī (p. 158/159), can almost certainly be dated to a single occasion, the wedding

of 'Ismat Khātūn, the daughter of Malikshāh and sister of Sultan Muḥammad, to the Caliph al-Mustaẓhir, which was celebrated with great splendour in Baghdad in Rajab 504/January 1111 (Ibn al-Jauzī IX pp. 165–66; IA X p. 339; Madelung 1971 p. 133 n. 6). Two of the poems indicate that Mu'izzī was present, as there is an explicit reference to the arrival of a royal bride. All three poems emphasise the strong ties of friendship and alliance between Sultan and Caliph. Mu'izzī's presence is a little puzzling, as he was not a panegyrist of Muḥammad, but he may have been sent by Sanjar as a compliment to his brother, though it seems that 'Ismat Khātūn was not their full sister. The only daughter of Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn mentioned by Mu'izzī is Shāh Khātūn Safīya, the mother of Seljūk Shāh, to whom Mu'izzī wrote a panegyric (p. 558/512), and there is no word of a royal wedding in any of his poems to Sanjar or Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn. A formal ceremony, whether of betrothal or marriage, had taken place in Iṣfahān in 502/1108–9, and a dowry of 100,000 dinars had been paid (IA X p. 330), but the bride did not enter her husband's house until two years later. The reason why the Sultan accompanied his sister to Baghdad was probably in part political. Earlier in the year, the Byzantine emperor Alexius had sent a messenger to Muḥammad calling on him to fight the Crusaders. The people of Aleppo reproached the Sultan because the *malik al-Rūm* was more inclined to defend Islam than he was, and also sent a deputation to Baghdad, which provoked riots against the Caliph's apparent indifference to the Crusader threat (IA X p. 339). The operations in Syria conducted by Muḥammad's governors in Mosul can be seen as a reaction to these criticisms; but because of disunity among the Muslim rulers of Syria they met with little success.

Mu'izzī introduces this topic explicitly into his poems to the Sultan and the Qādī, and even hints at it in the poem to the Caliph. 'When I saw his night-black banner [the 'Abbāsid colour] giving birth to victory, I knew what the wise man's saying ["What will the night bring forth?"] meant' (p. 171, l. 40). The main theme of this poem, however, is the closeness of the relationship between Caliph and Sultan. The poet presents them as two halves of a whole, the lawful spiritual and temporal heads of Islam, much in the way in which he depicted the relationship between Malikshāh and Niẓām al-Mulk, the chief difference being the religious dimension.

> He [the Caliph] is the true imam, the Sultān is the rightful king.
> The one has the mandate of the sword, the other the pen of the Shari'a [*imām-i rāstīn ast ū u shāh-i rāstān sultān wilayāt-i tīgh ān dārad shari'at-i kilk īn dārad*].
>
> (p. 171, l. 40)

The rightful king has a covenant (*'ahd*, a word that features in the poem to the Qādī) with the true imam, and the fortune (*daulat*) of the great Sultan (*sultān-i mu'aẓẓam*, a title also given to Malikshāh and Sanjar) brings fortune to the

Caliph. Mu'izzī ends the poem with an expression of his pleasure at being in Baghdad: '[My] mind and nature blossom in Baghdad, for this garden [*bāgh*] has the qualities of both rose and jasmine' (p. 171, l. 4057).

The Qādī Abū Sa'd al-Haravī was in turn *qāḍī* of Damascus, Baghdad, and, much later, of Sanjar's empire. He was greatly respected for his learning, his benefactions, and his diplomatic skills, and several times acted as an emissary on behalf of both Sultan and Caliph. After the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 492/1099, he accompanied a group of refugees to Baghdad to ask for help from the Caliph (IA X p. 192; Bundārī 1889 p. 144; Madelung 1971 p. 144, n. 82), and in 501/1107–8 he was an intermediary between the Sultan and the Caliph and Sayf al-Daula Sadaqa (IA X pp. 307, 311). In 504/1110, according to Ibn al-Jauzī, he was sent from Baghdad to escort 'the Khātūn, the daughter of Malikshāh' to Baghdad for her marriage, bringing her to the Dār al-Mamlakat where she stayed with her brother Sultan Muḥammad (Ibn al-Jauzī IX p. 165). Mu'izzī enlarges on this in his poem (p. 158/159). The Qādī is the messenger who, every year, has brought a message from the Caliph to the Shāhānshāh renewing the covenant or contract (*az pay tajdīd-i 'ahd*), and a robe of honour (*tashrīf*) and gifts from the Commander of the Faithful to the Shāh and the army, 'for the sake of the victory of Islam and religion'. The Qādī also brings generous gifts to his friends in every city. The covenant in question appears to be the marriage contract: the reason for the covenant must be that it is pleasing to the two courts to bring a royal bride to the royal court in due time (*'ahd-i shāhān-ra sabab bayad rāḍī al-haḍratayn tā zi haḍrat mahd-i khātūnī ba-hangām āvurad*) (p. 159, l. 3713). No time could be more appropriate than this season of early spring, when thunderstorms are drenching the flowers in rain (ll. 3714–15). Mu'izzī ends the poem on a personal note; he is delighted to be invited to the Qādī's *majlis*, but feels an unusual diffidence (perhaps at the prospect of facing a predominantly Arabic-speaking audience). His poems have value, he says, because they give voice to the thoughts and feelings of his heart, which some people may regard as a revelation from heaven, others as confused dreams (ll. 3727 ff.).

A short passage in this poem brings in the main theme of the poem to Muḥammad: 'Because of your missions [*risālat-hā*] it would be no wonder if the King of the World were to set out from Syria in *ghāzī* warfare' (l. 3723). After addressing Muḥammad by a variety of titles, including *ṣāḥib-qirān* (he does not actually name him as sultan) (p. 581/531), Mu'izzī proceeds to a brief passage of praise for Muḥammad's justice, good government, and his partnership with the Caliph, and then urges him to take the field in person as a *ghāzī* against the Crusaders in Northern Syria, in crude and violent terms similar to the language used in the poem to Berkyārūq on the same subject, already quoted (pp. 579/530 ff.).

It will not be long before fate lays an ambush for the unbelievers.

Those miserable idolaters will become the sport of lions, those accursed pig-eaters will become food for pigs.
The bones of the Franks will be pulverized by the hooves of the army's horses at the gates of Antioch.
From the banks of the river 'Āsī [the Orontes] to the shore of the Euphrates, the dust of every house will be kneaded into paste with the blood of the heathen.
The drum of victory will thunder out over the deserts of Aleppo, as its sound rings out in 'Āmida [Diyārbakir] and Mayyāfāriqīn.
That victory will adorn the dynasty until the day of resurrection, and will affect the history of the kingdom and the Faith until the day of judgment.

(ll. 13528 ff.)

The remaining two poems in this group are to officials of Sultan Muḥammad, who, for different reasons, both fell foul of their master and were executed. Abū'l-Maḥāsin Sa'd al-Mulk Sa'd b.Muḥammad Āvī had held various secretarial posts under Malikshāh and Berkyārūq, and was appointed vizier to Muḥammad after Berkyārūq's death in 498/1105. In 500/1107 he was executed on suspicion of heresy, with several other officials, while Muḥammad was conducting a pogrom against Ismā'īlīs in Iṣfahān. He had served Muḥammad well, but had fallen from favour; Ibn al-Athīr comments drily: 'This is the end of the service of kings' (IA X p. 304; Bundārī 1889 p. 72; *Mujmal* p. 411). Mu'izzī's poem to Sa'd al-Mulk was probably written in Malikshāh's reign, as he does not address him as vizier; it contains nothing of note (p. 187). The second poem (p. 684/617), on the other hand, is a literary *tour de force*. The *mamdūḥ* is Shams al-Dīn Zayn al-Mulk Abū Sa'd b.Hindū, who had a chequered career as *mustaufī* to Muḥammad, beginning in 498/1104–5, and ending with his execution for extortion and slander in 506/1112–3 (IA X pp. 239–41; CHIR V p. 139). He was the head of Muḥammad's *dīvān-i istīfā'* from 504/1110–11 to 506/1112–13, and so could have been with the Sultan in Baghdad, but references in the text to Arslān Arghū (d.490/1097), and to 'Qādir Khān', claiming that he and 'Caesar' were currently paying tribute to the unnamed sultan, suggest that the poem may have been written earlier. Qādir Khān Jibrā'īl b.'Umar of Talās and Bālāsaghūn, presumably the Qādir Khān Mu'izzī had in mind, unless he was using the name as a generic term for the khāns of Transoxania, was a vassal of the Seljuqs who invaded Khurāsān in 495/1102 and was defeated and killed by Sanjar near Tirmidh (IA X pp. 239–41; CHIR V p. 139). Nothing is known about Abū Sa'd b.Hindū's previous history, and the *qaṣīda* seems to be a 'fun' poem for a new patron, light-hearted in tone, and remarkable for the ingenuity with which Mu'izzī finds words ending in -*ū* to rhyme with the patron's patronymic. Usually if this rare rhyme is used, the rhyme-word is '*ū*' or '*tū*' (cf. Farrukhī, *Dīvān* pp. 341,

342, and other poems in Mu‘izzī's *dīvān*), but in this display piece Mu‘izzī has evidently taken pains to search for exotic vocabulary that will amuse his patron.

The same feature can be found in one of the poems in the final group, addressed to the future Khwārazmshāh Atsiz b. Muḥammad (p. 434/405). According to Juvaynī, Atsiz was well-known for his erudition and knowledge (*faḍl u dānish*), and wrote many poems and *rubā'īs* in Persian. The vocabulary of Mu‘izzī's poem, which uses the rhyme *-ang*, is a severe test of anyone's knowledge of Persian (Iqbāl appends more notes to this poem and to the previous one than to any other poems in the *dīvān*), and Mu‘izzī probably knew that his patron was likely to understand and appreciate its subtleties of language, sound and word-play. It seems likely that Atsiz, who died aged 59 in 552/1157, was very young when Mu‘izzī wrote his poem; he did not succeed his father as Khwārazmshāh until 522/1127–8, after Mu‘izzī's death. A passage in the poem suggests that it may have been written shortly after the overwhelming victory of the Crusaders at Dānith in 509/1115, and this would be consistent with the general impression given by Mu‘izzī that Atsiz was a youth at the time he addressed him. He says that Atsiz's valour is such that if his father were to send him against the Franks, he would shatter the Cross and the dwellings of the Franks and hang up their bodies in front of their houses, and he urges Atsiz to kill all the idolaters from Rūm to Khwārazm (p. 435, ll. 20258–60). He confirms Atsiz's titles of Bahā' al-Dīn and ‘Alā' al-Daula, which are known from later sources. He expresses his respect for and gratitude to the house of Khwārazm, and, on a personal note, he warmly thanks Atsiz for an unexpected visit of condolence when he was ill: ‘You did not delay, but came in haste at midnight, more than a *farsakh*, to visit me when I was sick' (p. 435, l. 10268). In addition to its literary qualities, the poem is interesting for the pleasant light it throws on the character of Atsiz, and as another example of the ferocity with which Mu‘izzī denounces the Crusaders.

The *qaṣīda* to Atsiz's father the Khwārazmshāh Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad (p. 295/284) is in some respects puzzling, and there may be some textual confusion. The *mamdūḥ* is addressed as *‘Imād-i daulat u dunyā Jamāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh*, not by his usual title of Quṭb al-Dīn, and also as Khwāja, a title almost exclusively reserved for senior members of the bureaucracy (*ay haq-guzār khwāja u khidmatgār-i shāh*, l. 7107). A short passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* ends with a line describing Mu‘izzī's pleasure when the patron summons him and demands a poem (l. 7111); it is almost identical to the last line of a similar passage in a poem to Malikshāh (p. 224, l. 5439/p. 223).

I, your slave, have made many panegyrics to crowned heads; this panegyric will in time be a memorial of me.
They know my service and they respect me, the shāh of high fortune and the great vizier …

> My day becomes joyful when you say to me 'Come!' My nature expands when you say to me 'Bring!'
>
> (ll. 7108–9, 7111)

> My fortune becomes young when you say to me 'Come!' My nature rains pearls when you say to me 'Bring!'
>
> (l. 5439)

The *nasīb* and the *du'ā'*, however, are entirely appropriate for a Turkish amir; the *nasīb* is a long (18-line) riddling description of the patron's sword, and in the *du'ā'* Mu'izzī plays on the opposite meanings of the word '*qār*' in Persian ('pitch') and Turkish ('snow').

The third Khwārazm poem (p. 326) is to an unidentified high-ranking official, Ẓahīr al-Dīn Abū Sa'd (Mas'ūd), with the additional titles of Zayn al-Mulk, Fakhr al-Ma'ālī and Shams al-Kufāt, who held an important post in Khwārazm, possibly as *vakīl* (*yā hast ba-Khwārazm zi taqdīr vakīl*, l. 7760). Khwārazm is now like a complete register of his good works (l. 7769), and everyone is grateful:

> The Shāhānshāh, the Khwārazmshāh, the Khwāja [i.e. the Vizier] and the army all extend their thanks to you.
>
> (l. 7778)

> Through your *farr* Khwārazm is like Paradise, the Jayhūn flowing through it is like the spring of Kauthar.
>
> (l. 7790)

The only indication of date is in the *du'ā'*, which shows that the poem was written during the sultanate of Muḥammad (498–511/1105–18): 'May the religion of [the Prophet] Muḥammad be beloved by you, as long as the realm of [Sultan] Muḥammad lasts, and the fortune of Sanjar' (l. 7802). It appears that the *mamdūḥ* had been sent to Khwārazm to settle some problems, possibly of a financial nature, but so little is known of the history of Khwārazm at this time that one can do no more than guess.

The last poem in this group is a long *qaṣīda* to Nāṣir al-Dīn Mujīr al-Daula Mukarram b.'Alā', vizier of Kirmān under the Seljuq rulers Tūrānshāh b.Qāvurd (477–90/1085–97) and his son Irānshāh (490–5/1097–1101). He appears to have been a capable vizier, as Kirmān prospered during the rule of Tūrānshāh, famous for his justice and piety; it weathered the short and troubled reign of Irānshāh, whose alleged conversion to Ismailism brought about his deposition and violent death, and returned to peace and prosperity during the long reign of Irānshāh's cousin and successor Arslānshāh. Little is known about Mukarram b.'Alā' himself; his chief claim to fame seems to have been his love of literature. Muḥammad b.Ibrāhīm, the

only source for his life (neither Bundārī nor Ibn al-Athīr mention him by name), says that his generosity to writers, especially poets, was legendary, and names the Arabic poets 'Abbāsī and Ghazzī, and the Persian poets Burhānī and Mu'izzī as recipients of his bounty. It seems most unlikely, however, that he was a patron of Burhānī; Mu'izzī would certainly have exploited this connection, and the information provided by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm suggests that he favoured Arabic rather than Persian poetry. 'Abbāsī praised his generosity, contrasting it with the stinginess of Niẓām al-Mulk: 'The Shaykh gives a dirham from his purse, the Minister [*ṣadr*] gives a purse of dirhams' (pp. 18–21).

Mu'izzī's poem was evidently composed between the years 490/1097 and 495/1101, as he addresses Ibn 'Alā' as *dastūr-i Irānshāh* (l. 11934), and nothing in it suggests that he had any personal acquaintance with the vizier or had visited Kirmān; it is almost entirely in praise of the patron's generosity, and may perhaps have been a 'mail-shot', sent in the hope of a reward. The most interesting part of a rather dull poem is a short passage comparing the patron to the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād, a stock comparison in panegyrics to viziers, but with more detail than usual. The humanity and tolerance of Ibn 'Alā' in doctrinal matters is contrasted with the severity of Ibn 'Abbād:

> That Ṣāḥib [Ibn 'Abbād] said that for one sin there is eternity in hell; this Ṣāḥib [Ibn 'Alā'] says that for one act of devotion there is eternity in paradise.
> The one perverted [*fasad*] the Shari'a in his house with his excesses [*ghulū kardī*]; the other seeks the good of men in his high house.
> The one knew that evil was from the devil and good from God; the other knows that evil and good are from God who is omniscient.
> (ll. 11941–43)

Iqbāl, in a note on these lines, interprets them as a reference to Ibn 'Abbād's Mu'tazilī beliefs.

The discussion of Mu'izzī's poems to the most notable members of Niẓām al-Mulk's family, his sons Fakhr al-Mulk and Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, his grandson Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b.Fakhr al-Mulk, and his brother's son Shihāb al-Islām Abū'l-Maḥāsin, all of whom were viziers to the sons of Malikshāh and major patrons of Mu'izzī, will begin with Mu'ayyid al-Mulk rather than his elder brother Fakhr al-Mulk. This is mainly for chronological reasons, especially with regard to Mu'izzī's biography. Mu'ayyid al-Mulk held the vizierate under Berkyārūq and Muḥammad, and disappeared from the scene in 494/1101, at a time when Mu'izzī's place of residence and position was unsettled and uncertain; the careers of the other members of the family, all successively viziers to Sanjar, belong chiefly, though not wholly, to the final period of his life, when he was established in Marv as Sanjar's poet laureate. His poems to two other senior officials, not related to the family but

closely involved with it, will also be considered. Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, to whom Mu'izzī wrote three *qaṣīdas* and a *tarkīb-band*, was head of the *dīvān-i istīfā'* in the latter part of Malikshāh's reign and under Berkyārūq. Kiyā Mujīr al-Daula Ardistānī, the *mamdūḥ* of eight poems, was Sanjar's first vizier, and was succeeded by Fakhr al-Mulk. Information about all these people is patchy and at times contradictory, and Mu'izzī's poems can be of some assistance in filling gaps.

Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, born *c.*444/1051, was the most energetic and talented of Niẓām al-Mulk's sons, and the only one who approached his father in ability; but his ambition, vindictiveness and lack of scruples were to lead to his downfall. Bundārī, quoting Anūshīrvān b.Khḥālid, who had been on his staff and knew him personally, has nothing but praise for his intelligence, integrity, judgment, charm and amiability (pp. 85, 88–89). Ibn al-Athīr, on the other hand, evidently using a different source, dismisses him in a brief obituary as avaricious and brutal, but very cunning and skilful in settling the affairs of the realm (IA X p. 206). He spent most of the first 10 years of Malikshāh's reign in Baghdad and the Jazīra, representing his father and the Sultan in an almost viceregal capacity, and occasionally taking part in military operations. After the fall of Sayyid al-Ru'asā' in 476/1083–4 he was appointed as *ṭughrā'ī* in his place, but the post was not to his liking; he asked to be released, and returned to Iraq for a time on a diplomatic mission. He then disappears from history for 10 years (477–87/1084–94); nothing is recorded of his activities during this period, though some of Mu'izzī's poems suggest that he was in Sīstān and Herāt. At the end of 487/1094, he was in Khurāsān, but fled (*haraba*) to Iṣfahān to join Berkyārūq, who appointed him as vizier in the place of his brother 'Izz al-Mulk, who had recently died. Mu'ayyid al-Mulk persuaded or bribed the Iraqi and Khurāsānī amirs who had deserted to Tutush to return to their allegiance, and was responsible for the final defeat of Tutush at Dāshīlū, near Rayy, in 488/1095. Berkyārūq personally expressed his gratitude to him, according to Anūshīrvān b.Khalid, who was present (Bundārī 1889 pp. 83–86; IA X pp. 158–59).

This triumph, however, was soon followed by his dismissal. He had incurred the enmity of Zubayda Khātūn, Berkyārūq's mother, who had much influence with her son, and when Fakhr al-Mulk, with whom he had quarrelled over jewels left by Niẓām al-Mulk, offered Berkyārūq an enormous sum of money and equipment and furnishings suitable for a royal court, the Sultan accepted the bribe and made Fakhr al-Mulk his vizier. Mu'ayyid al-Mulk's movements for the next three years are again rather uncertain. He was imprisoned for a time by Berkyārūq and released; his energies were then directed towards the search for a rival candidate to put up against Berkyārūq, in a quest for vengeance against the Sultan and his mother. He first persuaded Amir Oner, the governor of Fārs, who had been a favourite of Malikshāh, to claim the sultanate for himself, and to collect troops for an attack on Rayy; but the murder of Oner by Bāṭinīs early in 492/1099 put an

end to this ploy (IA X p. 192; ZD pp. 36–7/59–62). Muḥammad, the brother next in age to Berkyārūq, was now living in Ganja, in Azarbayjān, which had been given to him as an *iqṭā'* by Berkyārūq in 486/1093. After Oner's death, Mu'ayyid al-Mulk went to Ganja and was welcomed by Muḥammad. He took charge of the prince's affairs, which prospered under his management, and encouraged him to rebel against Berkyārūq. Muḥammad replaced Berkyārūq's name in the *khuṭba* with his own, made Mu'ayyid al-Mulk his vizier, and embarked on open warfare with his brother.

The first action of Muḥammad's forces was to drive Berkyārūq out of Rayy. Zubayda Khātūn, who had been left behind, was taken prisoner by Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. He mulcted her of land worth 5,000 dinars and then had her strangled, in spite of efforts to dissuade him by soldiers who still felt some affection for Berkyārūq (IA X p. 195). Meanwhile Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, Berkyārūq's *mustaufī*, and the *de facto* vizier in the place of the weak and incompetent Fakhr al-Mulk, was murdered by a group of mutinous amirs, and his head was brought to Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. Majd al-Mulk Abū'l-Faḍl Balāsānī or Barāvistānī Qummī was a controversial figure (it will be remembered that Arslān Arghū had refused to have any dealings with him), and an object of hostility to the Niẓāmīyya. He had succeeded Niẓām al-Mulk's ally Sharaf al-Mulk Mustaufī as the head of Malikshāh's *dīvān-i istīfā'*, but had allied himself with Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'īm against Niẓām al-Mulk, while his support for Zubayda Khātūn had earned him the personal enmity of Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. Bundārī, who presents him as a professional intriguer, determined to bring down Niẓām al-Mulk and his sons, nevertheless agrees with Ibn al-Athīr in praising his devoutness, his generosity in works of charity and almsgiving, and his dislike of bloodshed (Bundārī 1889 pp. 87–88). He omits to say that Balāsānī was a Shī'ī, unlike Ibn al-Athīr, who comments on his liberality to 'Alavīs and *arbāb al-buyūtāt* ('descendants of ancient houses') (IA X pp. 205–6; EIr 'Balāsānī'), and on his respect for the Companions of the Prophet (IA X pp. 196–97). Mu'izzī also mentions his devotion to 'Alī and the Family of the Prophet (p. 638, l. 14769; p. 53, ll. 17242–43). His Shiism, however, made him an object of deep suspicion to the amirs, who thought he was a Bāṭinī, and in 492/1098–9 they killed him in very brutal circumstances (ZD pp. 37–8/62–3). Majd al-Mulk was much respected for his ability and his scrupulous financial management, and two of Mu'izzī's poems to him reflect this:

> May the reckoning of the kingdom be in your hands until the day of reckoning [*shumār*].
>
> (p. 641, l. 14811/p. 581)

> Through his intellect and capacity, he has under his pen the treasure, the army and the realm of the *ṣāḥib al-qirān*.
>
> (p. 642, l. 14835)

These poems were probably written during Berkyārūq's short stay in Khurāsān in 490/1097, as Majd al-Mulk is twice praised for restoring peace in Iraq and Khurāsān (p. 640, ll. 4795–97/p. 580; p. 755, l. 17281/p. 676). Mu'izzī addresses him as *mushīr* and *ṣadr*, but never as vizier, and there is some doubt about whether he actually held the post (Klausner 1973 pp. 106–7).

In the following year, 493/1099–1100, the fortunes of Muḥammad and Mu'ayyid al-Mulk seemed to be riding high. In the first of five pitched battles, at Sepīd Rūd near Ḥamadān, Berkyārūq's forces were heavily defeated by Muḥammad's army of 20,000 men, which included Mu'ayyid and the Niẓāmīyya; but in 494/1101 the position was totally reversed. In this second battle, Muḥammad was defeated, and Mu'ayyid al-Mulk was captured by a *ghulām* of Balāsānī's and brought to Berkyārūq, who killed him with his own hand, specifically for causing the death of Zubayda Khātūn, for accusing the Sultan himself of Ismā'īlī sympathies, and for instigating the rebellion of Muḥammad (IA X pp. 205–6; Bundārī 1889 p. 68). According to the *Seljūk-nāma*, which gives a different version of the story and does not mention the killing of Zubayda Khātūn as a possible motive, Mu'ayyid al-Mulk offered Berkyārūq an enormous ransom, but was killed when he was unable to produce the money on time (ZD pp. 38/64–5). Ibn al-Athīr, whose version seems more plausible, adds the detail that Mu'ayyid al-Mulk's body was left on the ground for several days, until Amir Ayāz asked for and received permission to bury it (IA X p. 207).

The image of Mu'ayyid al-Mulk presented by his panegyrist is rather different from the picture given by the historians. He was a noted patron of poets in both Arabic and Persian, and could himself turn out an occasional *rubā'ī* in Persian; Nīshāpūrī and 'Aufī both quote examples (ZD pp. 36/59; 'Aufī 1957 pp. 67–68). He was a very generous patron to Mu'izzī, who wrote 15 poems to him; he once sent the poet 'a cup of pure silver, full of fresh aloe-wood, ambergris and exquisite musk' (p. 57, l. 1045/p. 58), and once came to his rescue after his belongings had been plundered (p. 424, ll. 9996 ff./p. 396). Mu'izzī's poems are designed to appeal to a patron whom he knew to be expert in the subtleties of court poetry, and are all of literary, if not historical, interest. One example is a *mu'ārada* apparently inspired by or composed in imitation of a lost poem of 'Asjadī (p. 53, especially l. 1025/p. 55). Mu'ayyid al-Mulk was an appreciative and attentive audience:

> He listened to the poem I recited just as Aḥmad the chosen listened
> to the revelation from the Angel Gabriel.
> When my words in praise of him were repeated, he showed pleasure
> and was not bored by the repetition.
>
> (p. 458, ll. 10804–5/p. 427)

Among poets I am the master of my company [*ustād-i anjuman-am*]; among amirs, you are the sun of your company.
I, as you know, am in love with your talents; you, as I know, are charmed by my *qaṣīdas*.
(p. 730, ll. 16739–40/p. 656)

In six of these poems, Mu'ayyid al-Mulk is addressed as amir, in others as *dastūr* or vizier, and this must reflect the different phases of his career. Since he spent so much time in Baghdad, it seems unlikely that Mu'izzī became his panegyrist until after his return from Iraq, probably in 477/1084, at the beginning of the 'lost' years. The poems contain no mention of Malikshāh and only an occasional reference to Niẓām al-Mulk, which suggests that Mu'ayyid al-Mulk did not take part in Malikshāh's campaigns or in political life in Iṣfahān; Mu'izzī seems to be the only source, and that a very fragmentary one, for his life until 487/1094. Three poems, two of which address him as amir and one as vizier, refer to unspecified activities in Sīstān and Herāt. He was apparently engaged in military operations in Sīstān, possibly involving a fort, as he is compared with 'Alī at Khaybar: 'He who tells the story of the fort of Khaybar, and speaks of Haydar, He speaks of you as Haydar in battle and he tells of Khaybar in Sīstān' (p. 180, ll. 4313–14). A short passage in the *Tārīkh-i Sīstān* may possibly throw some light on this. In Jumāda I 485/June 1092, a certain Amīr Mu'ayyid came to the *shāristān*, the citadel of Zarang, capital of Sīstān, which was held by the Saffāriḍ ruler Bahā' al-Daula, and laid siege to it until the beginning of Ramaḍān (October 1092). Bahā' al-Daula then abandoned the *shāristān* and went to Qūhistān to seek help from Malikshāh's general Qizil-Sāri', who was conducting a war against the Ismā'īlīs of Qūhistān. When they heard of Malikshāh's death in November 1092, they returned to Sīstān, apparently hoping to dislodge Amir Mu'ayyid, but he stayed in Zarang until the end of Rabi' II 487/May 1094, when he and his people left the citadel. He is not mentioned again, and no explanation of who he was or what he was doing in Sīstān is offered either in the text, or by the editor Bahār or the Russian and English translators (TS pp. 386–87; Smirnova 1974: pp. 360–61; Gold 1976: pp. 316–17). Could he have been Mu'ayyid al-Mulk?

There are two references to Mu'ayyid al-Mulk's presence in Herāt. The first is in an 'Īd al-Fiṭr poem (p. 251/247), the *nasīb* of which is a lively celebration of the pleasures of wine and feasting now that the fast is over. Mu'ayyid al-Mulk is addressed as *mīr-i ajall*; he sits in 'the city of Alexander [Herāt]' like Khidr, the 'green prophet', who in legend was one of Alexander's ministers (p. 252, ll. 6103 ff.); perhaps he was the governor of Herāt, like Fakhr al-Mulk in Balkh. Mu'izzī himself seems not to have been in Herāt when the poem was written: 'When will the day come when I come like a slave to the carpet of your *majlis*, the threshold of your

door?' (p. 253, l. 6109), but he evidently reached the city in the end. In another poem (p. 689/621) he recalls, in Rayy, a dream he had:

> … last year in the month of Ramaḍān, in Herāt,
> For your high majlis I had made a collection of my panegyrics and *ghazals*, more than fifty [*sic*] in number.
> It is lost and I have nothing like it; how can there be anything like a peerless pearl?
>
> (p. 691, ll. 15890–92)

This poem can almost certainly be dated to 493/1099, as it must refer to the presence in Rayy of Muḥammad and his forces, after the appointment of Mu'ayyid al-Mulk as his vizier. Mu'ayyid al-Mulk is congratulated, and is addressed as *ṣadr-i vizārat*, *vazīr-i shāhānshāh*, who has the favour of the two Muḥammads in the two worlds: 'On the day of reckoning [the Prophet] Muḥammad will be your advocate, on the day of battle [the Sultan] Muḥammad will be your refuge' (p. 689, l. 15886). Mu‘izzī presumably accompanied Mu'ayyid al-Mulk to Rayy in Muḥammad's train, and expresses total devotion to him in somewhat enigmatic terms:

> It is proper that I should speak of my own state, for your judgment is well aware of your slave's state.
> Now that I have come to you with an undivided heart, why should I care that the pace was altered by events?
> When I turned back again to the mountain of your fortune, why should I be afraid if the wind takes my donkey's hay?
>
> (p. 691, ll. 15887–89)

This may be an oblique reference to the third topic of the poem, the murder of Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, who had also been a generous patron to Mu‘izzī. His downfall is attributed to his ambition and arrogance:

> He who laid the trap was caught in the trap; he who dug the pit fell into the pit.
> This is the fate of one who in his lifetime looked on men with the eye of mockery and scorn.
> In the end, when he is made an example among men, no one will grieve or sigh for him.
>
> (p. 691, ll. 15876–78)

Similar sentiments are expressed at greater length in another poem (p. 178/180), which, in the *Dīvān*, is addressed to Fakhr al-Mulk and names the *mamdūḥ* as Niẓām al-Dīn, one of Fakhr al-Mulk's titles; Iqbāl has emended this to ‘Imād al-Dīn, a title of Mu'ayyid al-Mulk, on the grounds that the

poem makes much better sense if Mu'ayyid al-Mulk is the *mamdūḥ* (Iqbāl *Vizārat* pp. 140–41):

> By the grace of God … the seeds that Niẓām al-Mulk patiently scattered have come to fruit.
> Qivām al-Dīn [Niẓām al-Mulk] in Paradise is glad that he has a son like Niẓām al-Dīn.
> The sons of Qivām al-Dīn in the garden of the vizierate are tall cypresses, fruitful trees.
> As for the strange [*bīgāneh*] tree which raised its head in that garden, its fortune was cast down by the hand of death.
> …
> He hung in the trap, although he had laid the trap; he fell into the pit, although he had dug the pit.
> He became a parable [*afsāneh*], that man who was an obstacle [*ān mard-i mu'auwiq*], by whom the work of all men was bound in knots and fetters.
> He has perished, that perfumed aloe-wood, because of whom foul smells afflict the state and the people.
> The whole of this story is all wisdom and advice [*ḥikmat u pand*]; this sermon will hold good until the resurrection.
> (p. 179, ll. 4265 ff.)

The fate of Majd al-Mulk is seen as exemplary; his attempt to encroach on the vizierate, the lawful preserve of the family of Niẓām al-Mulk, brought him down.

Kiyā Mujīr al-Daula (also Mujīr al-Dīn, Mujīr al-Mulk) Abū'l-Fatḥ 'Alī b.Ḥusayn Ardistānī, Sanjar's first vizier and the *mamdūḥ* of eight substantial *qaṣīdas* by Mu'izzī, which contain much of interest from both the literary and historical angles, began his career as deputy to Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'īm in the *dīvān-i inshā' u ṭughrā'*, after the death of Adīb Mukhtār Zauzanī in 476/1083. According to Bundārī he was the correspondence secretary (*kātib al-rasā'īl*), 'unique and unparalleled in his time' (a standard term of praise); he was taciturn, well-conducted, resourceful and persevering (Bundārī 1889 p. 62). He was probably appointed as *ṭughrā'ī* after Tāj al-Mulk became vizier to the child Maḥmūd b.Malikshāh (d.487/1094), and Ibn al-Athīr calls him by this name. Ibn Funduq contributes a few further details. He appears to have been in Sanjar's entourage when the young prince was being treated for smallpox by 'Umar Khayyām (*Tatimma* p. 114). He was a noted patron of Arabic poets; one Abū'l-'Alā' Hamza Mujīrī Faryumadī took the *takhallus* Mujīrī from his name, and Mas'ūd b.'Alī Suwābī 'Azīzī wrote a *badīha* (an extempore poem) on his dismissal as vizier and replacement by Fakhr al-Mulk (*Tārīkh-i Bayhaq* pp. 406–7). Nothing more is known about his career until Berkyārūq made Sanjar *malik* of Khurāsān in 490/1097, with Ardistānī as his vizier (IA X p. 180).

In all Mu‘izzī’s poems to Ardistānī he is addressed as vizier or *ṣadr*, but there is considerable uncertainty about the length of his vizierate. According to Bundārī he was replaced by Fakhr al-Mulk in the same year, 490/1097, and this is accepted by Iqbāl (Bundārī 1889 p. 265). Ibn al-Athīr, on the other hand, says that he was dismissed by Sanjar in 497/1104, following an accusation that he was the author of letters fomenting trouble between Sanjar and his *sipāhsālār* Amīr Bozgush. The handwriting of these letters was identified as his, and Sanjar had him arrested and threatened to kill him; Amīr Bozgush interceded for him, on the grounds of his long service, and he was banished to Ghazna (IA X pp. 259–60). This story seems out of character, and he was probably the victim of an intrigue. ‘Uqaylī also associates Ardistānī’s later life with Ghazna, stating that he was sent as an ambassador to Bahrāmshāh of Ghazna and spent the rest of his life there (p. 233); but as Bahrāmshāh’s reign did not begin until 511/1118 this seems unlikely. The compiler of *Faḍā’il al-anām*, which includes three letters from Ghazālī to Ardistānī, writes of him as *vazīr-i shahīd* Mujīr al-Dīn, implying that he died by violence, but nothing is recorded of the date or circumstances of his death. Modern historians also differ about the date of his dismissal. Klausner (p. 107) is non-committal, Lambton (p. 34) accepts Ibn al-Athir’s date, and Bosworth (CHIR V p. 207) dates the beginning of Fakhr al-Mulk’s vizierate to 494/1101.

The contemporary evidence of Ghazālī’s letters and Mu‘izzī’s poems makes it clear that Ardistānī held the vizierate for much longer than a few months. The first of the letters from Ghazālī (pp. 49–53) congratulates him on his appointment as vizier, and was probably written in that year (490/1097), at about the time when Ghazālī returned to his native city of Ṭūs, some two years after withdrawing from public life (EIr ‘Ghazālī’). He praises Ardistānī’s ability and expresses the hope that he will restore order and prosperity to Ṭūs, which he says is much afflicted with factiousness and instability. In the second letter (pp. 53–55) he describes Ardistānī as the *ṣadr* who is the most clear-sighted of the *ṣudūr* of the age. The third letter (pp. 57–59) was evidently written several years later; it quotes the downfall of Majd al-Mulk (492/1099) and Mu’ayyid al-Mulk (494/1101), together with the fate of Tāj al-Mulk (486/1093), as examples of over-confidence, arrogance and refusal to take warning from the lessons of history. Mujīr al-Daula should not follow their example; he must deal with the violence in Khurāsān, especially in Ṭūs (always Ghazālī’s primary concern), caused by the seizure by oppressors of taxes due to the sultan (pp. 49–59). This letter indicates that Ardistānī was vizier at least until after the death of Mu’ayyid al-Mulk in 494/1101, and a poem by Mu‘izzī that unequivocally refers to events in the following year shows that he was still vizier in 495/1102; he is addressed as *ṣadr* and *dastūr-i pādshāh* (p. 42, ll. 789–90/p. 49, ll. 15–16).

In this year, the Qarakhānid Qādir Khan Jibrā’īl b.’Umar of Talās (Tarāz) and Bālāsaghūn (not, as Ibn al-Athīr says, of Samarqand), accompanied by

one Toghril-tigīn, not mentioned elsewhere but identified by Pritsak (IA 'Karahanlihar') as Qādir Khan's father 'Umar b.Muḥammad, took advantage of the fighting between Berkyārūq and Muḥammad, a serious illness of Sanjar, and the treachery of one of his senior amirs, to cross the Oxus with an army of Chigil tribesmen and invade Khurāsān. The reaction of Sanjar, now recovered from his illness, was rapid and decisive. His forces encountered and defeated Qādir Khan near Tirmidh, which had been seized by the invaders; the Khan himself was captured and promptly executed (IA X pp. 239–41). Mu'izzī refers to this victory several times in poems to Sanjar (e.g. pp. 3/20; 194, 584/534), but his poem to Ardistānī contains considerably more detail, and also makes much of Ardistānī's share in the operations; he is addressed as 'Amīr' (*amīr-ī mujīr u Mu'ayyid*), and there is a suggestion that he took part personally in the battle. The war is presented as a struggle between a just ruler and an unjust and irresponsible band of marauders:

> Qādir Khan and Toghril-tigīn both rushed into battle with you [*sic*] in pride and arrogance.
> The one did not believe that death would seize him, the other did not know that fate would mock him.
> A tribe of Chigil appeared in iniquity [*bī-dādī*] like a swarm of ants, without number or limit …
> They did not take a plundering band back to Khutan, they took a hundred defeated bands back to Khitā.
> That tribe was full of pride and iniquity, their hearts and minds empty of shame.
> Your justice was like a mountain in the battle; injustice rebounded off it like an echo …
> They abandoned their weapons as they fled; their helmets and armour could be seen from Uzgend to Herāt, on the mountains, in forts, in town and country.
>
> (ll. 821–35)

Another event mentioned by Mu'izzī, for which he seems to be the only source, is a visit made by Ardistānī to Baghdad to receive a *khil'at* from the Caliph al-Mustaẓhir (pp. 360/339 ff.). Mu'izzī comments admiringly on the speed of the return journey from Nahr al-Ma'ālī, a tributary of the Tigris and presumably near the Caliph's palace, to the palace of Shādyākh in Nīshāpūr, which took 40 days in very cold and unseasonable autumn weather.

> From Arabia to the borders of Turān, no one has seen such speed in forty days.
> Especially in a season when, because of the cold, it was impossible to make the stream flow until the sun rose.

The steppe was full of steel and the wild asses were unable to graze; the mountain was full of camphor and the twittering of the partridges was silent.
The necklaces of the rosebushes were broken in the month of Mihr [September-October]; the pipes of the nightingales were broken in the month of Tīr [June-July] [*sic*].
The north wind fired Esfandiyār's arrows; the pool wore Rostam's coat of mail.

(ll. 8538 ff.)

The Caliph's palace is compared to Khavārnaq, the palace in Persia to Sadīr, another palace of Bahrām Gūr (l. 8546). The poem was perhaps composed for Mihragān, as there is talk of the delights of wine, and possibly also to celebrate Ardistānī's return. He is twice named as vizier and *kadkhudā* of the King of the East, but no reason or date is indicated for his journey and the presentation of the *khil'at*. It may have been connected with the joint visit of Muḥammad and Sanjar to Baghdad in 493/1099–1100, during which the Caliph complained of the behaviour of their troops (IA X p. 210). If so, the weather described so vividly may have been the unusual cold spell in 492/1099, mentioned earlier, which destroyed the crops in Khurāsān (IA X p. 197); this is the only passage in which Ibn al-Athīr comments on strange weather during the period of Ardistānī's vizierate.

Among other points of interest in these poems is a very vague mention of a victory in or involving Gurgān (p. 619, ll. 14329–30/p. 561), against an unspecified enemy: 'When your [*sic*] enemy embarked on the ship of hatred, the ship overturned and the poor wretch was drowned' (l. 14323). This may be an indirect reference to the battle of Naushajān in 493/1100 between Sanjar and his amirs on the one side, and Berkyārūq and Ḥabashī on the other, after which the defeated Berkyārūq fled to Gurgān and Ḥabashī himself was killed (IA X pp. 201–2). A curious point about this poem, like the poem on the defeat of Qādir Khan, is that Ardistānī is addressed as if he, rather than Sanjar, was the victor; whether this is flattery, or due to some textual confusion, is impossible to decide. A poem celebrating the entertainment of Sanjar by Ardistānī, apparently soon after the victory at Tirmidh (pp. 111–2/110), presents the conventional view:

The Vizier is the moon, the King of the East is the sun; the sun gives light to the radiant moon.
The Vizier is the cloud, 'Aḍud al-Daula [one of Sanjar's titles] is the sea; the pearl-giving sea is the source of the rain-cloud.

Two of the poems give Ardistānī the additional title, not mentioned in other sources, of 'Amīd al-Mulk, the most famous holder of which was Alp Arslān's vizier Kundurī (p. 391/366; p. 623/566). Finally, in addition to the

eight panegyrics, there is what is perhaps the most impressive of Mu'izzī's poems to Ardistānī, a *marthīya* on the death in Marv of his young son Abū Ṭāhir. It is in the form of a *qaṣīda*; the *nasīb* is a *tauhīd*, a meditation on the unity of God, the *madīḥ* is the *marthīya* itself, and the *du'ā'* is a prayer that Ardistānī may be granted patience and acceptance in the face of his grief (pp. 363/342 ff.).

The final period of Berkyārūq's reign led to another watershed in Mu'izzī's life, ending the 10 years or so of *Wanderjahre* that had begun with the death of Malikshāh. It seems unlikely that he became a permanent member of Sanjar's court until 494/1101. The present writer has been unable to find references to events before this date in his poems to Sanjar, the earliest of which appear to be two poems congratulating him on his recovery from a serious illness (pp. 109 ff., 283/274), presumably the illness that he suffered on his return from Baghdad in 494/1101. Mu'izzī's career before this date can be loosely divided into three phases. From 486/1093 to 490/1097 his chief *mamdūḥ* was Arslān Arghū, but he also wrote poems to various Khurāsānī notables. The death of Arslān Arghū early in 490/1097, followed by the arrival of Berkyārūq in Khurāsān for a stay of less than a year, extended the range of his patrons to partisans of Berkyārūq with a notably Shī'ī orientation: Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, probably already known to him from the time of Malikshāh, Amīrdād Ḥabashī, and Ismā'īl Gīlākī of Ṭabas. Meanwhile he had maintained his long-standing links with the family of Niẓām al-Mulk. Some of the poems to Mu'ayyid al-Mulk possibly, and to Fakhr al-Mulk certainly, predate the death of Malikshāh, and, as we shall see in the next chapter, he addressed poems to Fakhr al-Mulk as Berkyārūq's vizier. He evidently shared the conviction of the family that they had an inborn right to the vizierate, which is reflected in his rather brutal comments on the death of Majd al-Mulk, who, by his own account, had been a generous patron to him. When Mu'ayyid al-Mulk joined Muḥammad in 492/1099, Mu'izzī abandoned what seemed to be the lost cause of Berkyārūq and went with him; but the death of his patron at the hands of Berkyārūq imposed yet another change of allegiance on him, and he made what was to be his final move, to Sanjar.

6

MU'IZZĪ

Life under Sanjar as Malik, 498/1105 to 510/1117

The last part of Mu'izzī's career seems to have been settled and peaceful, apart from one violent incident. The agreement reached between Muḥammad and Sanjar after Berkyārūq's death, and Sanjar's continued residence in Khurāsān, brought a long period of comparative peace and stability to the great province, devastated by the succession struggle of Berkyārūq's reign. Sanjar seems to have seen his role primarily as the defender of Khurāsān from internal and external threats, whether from rival claimants, dissident groups or foreign invaders. He was prepared to take decisive action where necessary against the Qarakhānids of Transoxania, and he maintained good relations with the Ghaznavid sultans during the strong reigns of Ibrāhīm and Mas'ūd III. The rivalry between Mas'ūd's sons over the succession after his death in 509/1115 gave Sanjar an opportunity to intervene and to carry out his first major military campaign, the invasion of the Ghaznavid empire, the capture of Ghazna itself in 510/1117 and the establishment of Bahrāmshāh on the throne as the vassal of the Seljuqs. This was followed two years later, after the death of Muḥammad, by a large-scale foray to western Iran to enforce his supremacy over Muḥammad's son Maḥmūd. About a third of Mu'izzī's 60-odd poems to Sanjar describe or refer to these two campaigns, the chief military events of Sanjar's reign during Mu'izzī's lifetime; the subject was evidently as acceptable to Sanjar as Farrukhī's poems on his Indian conquests had been to Maḥmūd of Ghazna. The campaigns and the poems referring to them will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Capable and dominating though he was, Sanjar was a man of less charisma and narrower interests than his father, and without the restless ambition and military brilliance that had kept Malikshāh continually on the move in search of new conquests. Although the Khurāsānī Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī says that in Sanjar's reign Khurāsān was 'the source of religious science, the spring of excellence and the mine of knowledge and learning [*manshā'-i 'ulūm u manba'-i faḍā'il u ma'dan-i hunar u farhang*]' (ZD p. 45/82), it seems that his court was not a centre of culture, at least in this early period of his reign (Mu'izzī's life covered only the early years of his sultanate, which

lasted for over 30 years after the poet's death). Mu'izzī was not Sanjar's only court poet, but the poems of 'Abd al-Wāsi' Jabalī and Adīb Sābir, the most notable of his other panegyrists, appear to belong mostly to a later period. The very few historical references in Jabalī's 30-odd *qaṣīdas* to Sanjar, which nearly all address him as sultan and must therefore postdate Muḥammad's death in 511/1118, the career of Adīb Sābir, a major panegyrist of the Khwārazmshāh Atsiz whose reign did not begin until 521/1127, and the lack of coincidence between the names of Mu'izzī's patrons and those of the other two poets, suggest that most of their poems to Sanjar were written after Mu'izzī's death. The single *qaṣīda* in Sanā'ī's *dīvān* addressed to Sanjar (pp. 366–70), which, according to the rubric, was written in answer to questions put to Sanā'ī by Sanjar about doctrine (*madhhab*), has been dismissed by de Bruijn (1983 pp. 73–74) as a Shī'ī forgery.

It does seem, however, that Sanjar's intellectual interests (it will be remembered that he is said by Barthold to have been illiterate) were almost entirely confined to religious and doctrinal matters. According to the *Seljūk-nāma* he had a great respect for religious dignitaries and scholars; he was also on terms of friendship with less conventional religious figures, hermits, ascetics and 'holy men' (*abdāl u zuhhād u 'ibād-i nafsī*) and was generous to them (ZD pp. 45–82). This would appear to be consistent with a general simplicity of taste. He was perhaps more at ease with such people than with highly educated scholars and bureaucrats; he paid little attention to dress except on formal occasions, and his private amusements were not of a refined nature. The style of some of Mu'izzī's poems to him may suggest that he also had a preference for simpler forms of verse. His concern with religion and the proper teaching of religious studies is illustrated by his relationship with Ghazālī. In Dhū'l-Qa'da 499/July–August 1106, his vizier Fakhr al-Mulk, apparently on Sanjar's orders ('it was Fakhr al-Mulk, our servant, who sent you to Nīshāpūr'), compelled – *ilzām* (the same word is used by Ghazālī in his autobiography [*al-Munqidh*, p. 49 of Arabic text] and in letters in *Faḍā'il al-anām*, e.g. p. 10) – Ghazālī to leave his retreat in Ṭūs and resume teaching in the *madrasa* in Nīshāpūr. It seems plausible that *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, written in Persian during this period, was addressed to Sanjar (the Persian text names the patron as *malik-i mashriq*), rather than Sultan Muḥammad, as stated in the Arabic translation, which was made many years after Ghazālī's death. A few years later, probably in 503–4/1109–10, in an episode for which *Faḍā'il al-anām* is the only source, Ghazālī was accused by troublemakers of preaching false doctrine and slandering Abū Hanīfa. Sanjar, who was at the time encamped near Mashhad, where Ghazālī had sought refuge, insisted that Ghazālī should appear in person to defend himself against these charges, and Mu'in al-Mulk Abū'l-Qāsim 'Alī b.Sa'īd, the deputy vizier (*mamdūḥ* of seven poems by Mu'izzī), was instructed to send for Ghazālī, house him in his own quarters, and bring him into Sanjar's presence. Sanjar treated him with great courtesy, listened to and accepted his

defence, and Ghazālī returned home to a triumphant reception (*Faḍā'il* pp. 10–11).

Sanjar's family life was quiet. He had more than one wife, but there is no record of the domestic in-fighting that was a feature of the reign of Malikshāh, perhaps because his lack of sons precluded succession struggles. One of Mu'izzī's poems (p. 716/643) congratulates him on the birth of a son, who evidently did not survive. He had several daughters, who were married to relatives and allies, but the most important member of his family was his mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, a major patron of Mu'izzī, who addressed nine *qaṣīdas* to her and wrote a *marthīya* on her death in 515/1121. Sanjar's favourite amusements appear to have been banquets and drinking parties, and several of Mu'izzī's poems record entertainments given to him by his viziers (pp. 111/110, 205/204, 356/335, 377/354, 761/681). His preferred companions, however, were Turkish cronies and *ghulāms* with whom he could speak Turkish, and his liking for such people sometimes led him into serious misjudgments. The vizier Muḥammad b.Sulaymān Kāshgharī was a Turkish merchant who had ingratiated himself with Sanjar through his knowledge of Turkish and an enormous bribe (Khwāndamīr 1938 p. 190; Klausner 1973 p. 133), but his incompetence and corruption led to his dismissal after two years (Muharram 516–Ṣafar 518/March 1122–March 1124); Sanjar never again appointed a Turk as vizier (Bundārī 1889 p. 266). The murder of Fakhr al-Mulk's son and successor Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad in Dhū'l-Ḥijja 511/April 1118 is attributed by Bundārī to Sanjar's infatuation with a Turkish *ghulām* who took the opportunity, while Sanjar was drunk, to murder the vizier, who had objected to his interference in affairs of state. Sanjar, on hearing of this, immediately had the *ghulām* put to death. Ibn al-Athīr gives a less dramatic, though perhaps related, reason for Sadr al-Dīn's murder, his extreme unpopularity with Sanjar's Turkish amirs (Bundārī 1889 pp. 266–67; IA X p. 381).

The viziers and other senior officials of Sanjar who were Mu'izzī's *mamdūḥs*, though generally competent, were men of less personality and accomplishments than many of the *mamdūḥs* of previous reigns, and there is correspondingly less information about them. They were mostly new men, who had been trained in the bureaucracy under Niẓām al-Mulk and his successors (three of them were relatives of Niẓām al-Mulk), but had not previously held high office. The one exception was Fakhr al-Mulk, the sole survivor of the 'old guard'; he was born in 434/1042–3, the eldest son of Niẓām al-Mulk, but there is virtually no information about the first 50 years of his life, or any indication, apart from his title of Amīr, of what posts he may have held during Malikshāh's reign and his father's vizierate. It is clear, however, that he had managed to amass an enormous fortune during these years. Mu'izzī's poems to him, a few of which date back well into Malikshāh's reign, have some use as a source, though they are more notable for their literary qualities than for historical information or indications of

date. They also suffer from an unusual amount of textual confusion. One wrongly addressed poem (p. 178) has already been mentioned; the poems on pp. 587/532 and 662/599 are virtually identical, and the *mamdūḥ* is probably Sanjar, not Fakhr al-Mulk as in the rubric, while the short poem on p. 412/386 is reproduced on p. 741/665 as the first verse of a *tarkīb-band*, to which it clearly does not belong.

Fakhr al-Mulk's career during the nine or ten years after Malikshāh's death is almost as confusing as the texts of these poems, and the historical data are so scanty that it can be difficult to explain some of Mu'izzī's rather throw-away references to his patron's activities and place of abode; Mu'izzī did not feel the need to be explicit when they both knew what he was talking about. Ibn al-Athīr, the most comprehensive source, recording the events of 487/1094, says that Fakhr al-Mulk had been in Khurāsān, but left in order to join Berkyārūq. On the way he was intercepted by Amīr Qumāj, a partisan of the child Maḥmūd b.Malikshāh, who seized his possessions and apparently threatened his life. Fakhr al-Mulk fled to Ḥamadān, which had recently been captured by the forces of another claimant, Tutush b.Alp Arslān. At first Tutush wanted to kill him, but was persuaded by one of his amirs that Fakhr al-Mulk would be more useful as his vizier, because of the general respect for the house of Niẓām al-Mulk. He was sent to Baghdad to try to persuade the new caliph al-Mustaẓhir to include Tutush's name in the *khuṭba*. His persistent lobbying finally met with success, after the defeat of Berkyārūq's forces by Tutush, and he returned to Ḥamadān (IA X p. 158). In the following year, 488/1095, the position was reversed. Tutush was defeated and killed, and Fakhr al-Mulk was arrested, but was later released, and stayed in Rayy (IA X p. 167). As related in the previous chapter, he bought the vizierate from Berkyārūq, and remained nominally Berkyārūq's vizier until he was replaced in about 492/1099. It was probably about this time that he cast in his lot with Sanjar, but he seems to have spent some years in retirement in Nīshāpūr before being appointed vizier by Sanjar after the fall of Ardistānī, in 497/1104 or a year or two earlier. He was assassinated by a Bātinī on 'Ashūrā 500/11 September 1106 (IA X pp. 228–29).

It is difficult to gain much impression of Fakhr al-Mulk's personality from the available information. He comes across as a rather nebulous character, generally lacking in initiative, and pushed from one precarious situation to another, whose strongest characteristic was his acquisitiveness; Mu'izzī, naturally, sees him with other eyes. Bundārī, in a passage evidently taken directly from the hostile Anūshīrvān b.Kḥālid, says he was a mere figurehead, without capacity, merit or morals; his lineage was his only virtue, and he had nothing of the vizier but the name (pp. 86, 265). This harsh judgment is to some extent confirmed by one of Ghazālī's letters to him, apparently written soon after he became Sanjar's vizier. Ghazālī, taking up the cause of the people of Ṭūs, as he had done with Ardistānī and was to do with Sanjar, writes in a tone which suggests that he thought Fakhr al-Mulk was lazy,

self-indulgent and neglectful of his duties, but that he had hopes of shaming him into better behaviour and restoring order in Ṭūs. He describes his letter as a bitter but wholesome draught sent by the hand of a true friend, and urges Fakhr al-Mulk to follow the example of his martyred father (*pidar-i pīr-i shahīd-i tū*) in good works and attention to business. Ṭūs had been ruined by oppression and famine, and when people heard from Isfarā'īn and Dāmghān that Fakhr-al-Mulk was on his way, they were terrified; the farmers sold their corn, and the oppressors asked pardon of the oppressed. But now that he has arrived matters are much worse; the farmers and bakers have locked up their corn and their shops, and the oppressors have reverted to their old ways. Ghazālī's advice to the '*amīd* of Ṭūs has been disregarded, and he appeals to Fakhr al-Mulk, for the sake of his own soul, to help his subjects and the poor, in words reminiscent of Abū Naṣr-i Mishkān's admonitions to Mas'ūd of Ghazna.

> The remedy for such a calamity is the water of the eye, not the water of the grape, and all the friends of the house of Niẓām are concerned about this calamity; it must not be that the author of the calamity [*ṣāḥib-i mūsībat*] is unaware of his misfortune and occupies himself with amusements.
>
> (p. 31)

> For the sake of your martyred father, do you, tonight at midnight when people are asleep, get up and dress, perform the full ablutions, ask for an empty room and perform two *raka'ts* of prayer; put your face to the ground and ask God, with tears and humility, to open the road of happiness to you … then reflect for an hour on the sufferings of the subjects, in famine and misery, and try to see a way out of the problem.
>
> (pp. 29–32)

Mu'izzī's poems to Fakhr al-Mulk will be considered first for their historical content, and then for their other prominent characteristics, in particular the relationship between the poet and his patron; there is an unusual amount of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* in these poems, and some disquisitions on the poet's craft. It is not clear when Fakhr al-Mulk became a patron of Mu'izzī; but it was probably early in Malikshāh's reign, as the earliest reference to him in Mu'izzī's poetry seems to be in a poem to Malikshāh (p. 688/620), on the occasion of a banquet in his honour given by Fakhr al-Mulk ('the son of your Vizier'). The time is Naurūz (*nau bahār*), and the young Sultan is depicted in light-hearted terms as the personification of spring and of the sun: 'Except for you, I've never seen the spring wear a shirt; except for you, I've never seen the sun wear a cap' (l. 15823). There is much praise of Niẓām al-Mulk, and the Sultan's visit to Fakhr al-Mulk is an honour of which the

family will boast until the Day of Judgment. It is probable that the first poem addressed to Fakhr al-Mulk in person is one whose style and contents strongly suggest that it was intended to impress a new patron, like the poems by Farrukhī, Manūchihrī and Mu'izzī himself mentioned elsewhere. The elaborate *nasīb*, a riddling description of fire that ends in praise of the patron's sword, the exclusive concentration on his abilities as a soldier and as a host (*razm u bazm*), his superiority to certain *Shāhnāma* heroes (references to the *Shāhnāma* are fairly rare in these poems), and a mention of Burhānī in the final line, also make it likely that this was an early poem.

During the lifetime of his father and Malikshāh, Fakhr al-Mulk held the rank of amir. In a poem written during Sanjar's reign, Mu'izzī refers to his distinguished service as amir (p. 246, ll. 5964 ff./p. 242) and addresses him as 'Amir' in five poems (pp. 240/238, 255/251, 261/255, 412/386, 741/665, 603/550). According to one of these (p. 240/238), the date of which is uncertain, he was Amir of Khurāsān, and took part in a successful campaign; the Shāhānshāh was grateful to him, the Vizier (*dastūr*) was pleased with him, the camp (*lashkargāh*) was illuminated by him, and the army rejoiced in him (l. 5848). The Shāh is congratulated on having such a friend (*mu'nis*, perhaps equivalent to *nadīm*), and an unnamed city is congratulated on having him as its governor (*dāvūr*) (l. 5858). He is the great amir, the adornment of the amirs of the realm (p. 412/741), and in three of these poems, as in many others, his name is coupled with his father's. In a Mihragān poem (p. 261), he is Amīr Abū'l-Fatḥ Muẓaffar, the true son of his father; in the other two he is given the caliphal title of *mukhlis-i khalīfeh-i haqq* (p. 255) or *mukhlis-i imām-i zāmān* (p. 603), perhaps bestowed on him as his father's eldest son when Niẓām al-Mulk received his own title of *rāḍī amīr al-mu'minīn* (p. 605, ll. 14020–21) from the Caliph al-Qā'im (d.467/1074). In the same poem (p. 603), Fakhr al-Mulk is praised for having raised the standard of the amirate to the heights his father set for the vizierate.

The last poem to Fakhr al-Mulk as amir is the poem of consolation on Niẓām al-Mulk's death (p. 467/435) analysed in Chapter 5. Very few poems can be dated to the years immediately following Malikshāh's death; Fakhr al-Mulk was leading a wandering life, while Mu'izzī was based in Nīshāpūr. Only one poem can be dated with certainty to Fakhr al-Mulk's period as Berkyārūq's vizier (p. 242/240). He is named as *ṣadr-i vazīrān, vazīr-zāda u vazīr*, and he is in the same relationship to Berkyārūq as his father was to Malikshāh (p. 244, ll. 5897–98):

> After the death of Alp Arslān people said that Mu'izz al-Dīn [Malikshāh] was the son, Niẓām al-Mulk the father.
> Although Mu'izz and Niẓām have passed from the world, Muẓaffar [*Fakhr al-Mulk*] is the father, Bū'l-Muẓaffar [*Berkyārūq*] is the son.

This is followed by a description of the troubles of Khurāsān over a period of four years, caused by an unnamed *sipāh-kāshi* (evidently Arslān Arghū), and the relief of the people of Khurāsān and of Mu'izzī himself at the arrival of Fakhr al-Mulk, whom they see as their saviour. Another poem (p. 130/129), prophesying that 'the Sultan of the world' will, through Fakhr al-Mulk's management (*tadbīr*), conduct a successful campaign against the Byzantines and order the *khuṭba* to be read in Antioch, is so similar in wording to Mu'izzī's poem to Berkyārūq following the capture of Antioch by the Crusaders (p. 579) that it must belong to this period. After his dismissal by Berkyārūq, Fakhr al-Mulk returned to Nīshāpūr, and the poems begin again. An 'Īd al-Fiṭr poem (p. 83) portrays him as enjoying a life of leisure in Nīshāpūr, no longer occupied with affairs, in spite of his world-wide reputation (l.1710). A poem written for Naurūz (p. 253/249) also seems to belong to this time of idleness. Fakhr al-Mulk does not ask for office, but kings ask for him, because of his experience, and his descent: 'For thirty-six years you have been riding the horse of power in the meadow of kingship' (l. 6120). The vizierate is seen as his natural place: 'The vizierate left you to go on its travels; it wandered round the world and among many men. When it saw no one better than you it settled down with you' (p. 250, ll. 6041–42).

Most of the remaining poems to Fakhr al-Mulk were written during the last years of his life, when he was Sanjar's vizier. Two of them, like the one quoted above, speak of his long years of public service: 40 years of high rank and position (p. 246, l. 5967/242), and 50 years, in an 'Īd al-Fiṭr poem (p. 686/618), which, if interpreted literally, must have been composed for Shawwāl 500/June 1106, three months before his murder. Three of the other poems have some historical content. The first (p. 469/437) implies that Fakhr al-Mulk has only recently been made vizier; now everything that had gone wrong in the time of his predecessor (Ardistānī) has been put right. This is a standard form of congratulation to a new vizier, regardless of whether or not the predecessor was the poet's patron; it can be compared with Farrukhī's praise of Ḥasanak when he was appointed to replace Maymandī (see Chapter 3). Mu'izzī attributes 'the Khusrau of Irān's conquest of Tūrān' to Fakhr al-Mulk's management: 'When the King of the East put his foot in the stirrup beside the Jayhūn, the hand of your determination bridled the horse of his intent' (l. 11080). This may be a reference to Sanjar's campaign against Qādir Khān Jibrā'īl in 495/1102 (the success of which was credited to Ardistānī in an earlier poem, p. 42/49), or to the operations against another Qarakhānid pretender, Saghūn Beg, in the following year; it depends on the exact date of Ardistānī's dismissal and replacement by Fakhr al-Mulk, which is uncertain (see Chapter 5).

The other two poems (pp. 258/253, 419/392) are extremely problematic, and the lack of evidence from any other sources has made it impossible to offer more than very tentative interpretations. Both speak, one briefly and enigmatically (p. 419), and the other (p. 258) in more detail, of a journey or

campaign (*safar*) undertaken by Fakhr al-Mulk as Sanjar's vizier (*dastūr-i shāh-i sharq, ṣadr-i rūzgār*) to deal with unspecified and treacherous enemies. The journey seems to have been adventurous, and is compared with the *haft-khwān* of Esfandiyār and Rostam (p. 419, ll. 9913–14): 'You have successfully made a journey in which heaven raised the veil from its deepest secrets. You saw marvels the like of which Esfandiyār and Rostam did not see in their *haft-khwān'*. The operations against these 'lost souls' (*gumrāhān-i daulat*) and enemies of Islam, took two years, and Fakhr al-Mulk's part in them was diplomatic, not military; with his 'musk-scented pen', he was more effective among the Persians than 'Umar with his spear and 'Alī with Zulfiqar (1.6242–43). He had the support of the royal family (*khāndān-i malik*), but the household of the enemy was scattered like vines in autumn (1.6262–63). Reinforcements were summoned from Khwārazm:

> An amir in whose army were a thousand amirs came from Khwārazm like a slave in answer to your letter.
> He paid you homage and then took an army into battle from within Tūrān.
> Whatever you've heard of Esfandiyār and Rostam, believe it, and don't wonder at stories of the two,
> For today 10,000 *ghulāms* stand before you, each one a Rostam in battle, as strong as Esfandiyār.
>
> (ll. 6270 ff.)

The most likely explanation of this passage seems to be contained in a long excursus in the *Kāmil*, under the year 490/1097, occasioned by the murder of the Khwārazmshāh Ekīnchī b.Qochgar in that year (IA X pp. 181–83). Ḥabashī, the Amir of Khurāsān under Berkyārūq, took charge of Khwārazm and appointed Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad b.Anūshtigīn, mentioned in the previous chapter, first as governor of Khwārazm, and then as Khwārazmshāh. When Sanjar took control of Khurāsān, he confirmed the appointment, and Quṭb al-Dīn's ability and sagacity won him high favour; according to Juvaynī, he and his son Atsiz visited Sanjar's court in alternate years to pay their respects (vol. II p. 4). During one of Quṭb al-Dīn's absences, a group of Turkish princes banded together to attack Khwārazm, and Ekīnchī b.Qochgar's son Toghril-tigīn, who was with Sanjar, fled to join them. Quṭb al-Dīn hurried back to Khwārazm, after sending an appeal for help to Sanjar, who was in Nīshāpūr and promptly set out with an army, but the prospect of battle with Sanjar apparently daunted the Turks, who fled to Mangīshlaq, the far side of the Aral Sea, while Toghril-tigīn took refuge in Jand, in the lower Syr Darya region. The date of this episode is uncertain, but it was probably several years later than 490/1097, and, if the explanation offered is correct, took place during Fakhr al-Mulk's vizierate. Some confirmation of this is provided by a panegyric sent to Toghril-tigīn by Jabalī

(vol. I pp. 176–81), which gives him the titles of *Shams al-mulk*, *Yamīn al-daula*, *Amīn al-milla* and *Shihāb al-dīn,* and addresses him in terms that imply that he was, at least for a time, recognised as Khwārazmshāh. He is dearer than his son to the '*pādshāh* of the East and the West, the *shāhriyār* of the land and the sea', by whose pleasure he rules a great province, and his presence in Khwārazm has brought it fame and glory (pp. 179, 180). Jabalī expresses regret for being unable to cross the Oxus and present the poem in person (perhaps this was also a 'mailshot'). Ibn al-Athīr's narrative suggests that Toghril-tigīn was a guest at Sanjar's court (IA X pp. 182–83); his defection would have been seen as an act of ingratitude and treachery, and this would fit Mu'izzī's depiction of the unknown enemy. However, this is only conjecture and does not explain Fakhr al-Mulk's *haft-khwān*; perhaps he accompanied Sanjar's forces to Khwārazm.

One of the most noticeable features of Mu'izzī's poems to Fakhr al-Mulk is the constant harping on his descent, and on the inborn charisma of the family of Niẓām al-Mulk (the 'Ishāqīyān'), which gives him a natural right to the vizierate. It may be felt that Mu'izzī rather overplays this, and though he attributes all the standard virtues to his patron, little is said about outstanding intellectual ability or any other qualifications for the vizierate except his lineage. As the eldest son of Niẓām al-Mulk, he is the head of the family, and he stands in the relation of a father to Malikshāh's sons Berkyārūq and Sanjar just as Niẓām al-Mulk did to Malikshāh himself (e.g. pp. 189/189, 242/240, 356/335, 536/559, 587/662). Much is made of the military skill and success implied in his *kunya* Abū'l-Fatḥ and his *ism* Muẓaffar (e.g. pp. 173/174, 253/249, 472/439, 603/503), but no examples of successful military operations are quoted. His wealth, his palaces and his hospitality are also a major topic. A Naurūz poem of Sanjar's reign describes a new palace in superlatives; it has the beauty of Nūshirvān's palace and is covered in gold (p. 247, ll. 5987 ff./p. 243). Another palace, with a lake, is decorated like Nu'mān's Khavārnaq, and is as magnificent as the dome of Kisra at Ctesiphon (p. 260, l. 6280/p. 254). His hospitality is legendary; he once spent a sum as large as the annual revenue of Caesar, Faghfūr (emperor of China) and the Ray of India on a day's entertainment for the Khusrau (Sanjar) (p. 687, l. 5802), and through his generosity the market-place (*bazārgāh*) of the Shāh's army has become like Shūshtar and Baghdad (p. 688, ll. 15792–93/pp. 619–20).

Few of Mu'izzī's poems to Fakhr al-Mulk make more than conventional references to religion or imply that he was a particularly devout man. Ghazālī's reproaches to him, Mu'izzī's banqueting poems, and also, perhaps, the general shortage of information on his career as Sanjar's vizier, suggest that he spent much of his time on his pleasures. There was, however, another side to his character. Like his father, he followed the Shāfi'ī school; Ibn al-Athīr records that in 489/1096, as Berkyārūq's vizier, he appointed the Shāfi'ī *faqīh* Shaykh Abū 'Abdullah Ṭabarī to teach in the Niẓāmīyya in Baghdad

(IA X p. 177). This more serious side can be seen in Mu‘izzī's poem of condolences to him on his father's death (p. 467/435), in the two *marthīyas* on his own death (pp. 736/661, 410/384), the second of which is chiefly addressed to his son Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, and in the dramatic and moving account of the last day of his life given by Ibn al-Athīr. On this day, 10 Muharram, he was fasting; in a dream he had seen Ḥusayn b.'Alī, who said to him: 'Hasten to us, you'll break your fast with us'. He took this as a forewarning of his death, but refused to listen to the advice of his entourage that he should not go out during the day. He spent most of it in prayer, reading the Qur'ān and distributing generous alms; in the evening he left for the house of his wives, as Niẓām al-Mulk had done on the day of his murder. On the way he heard a man shouting that he had been wronged; he had the man brought to him and accepted a letter from him, but was stabbed and killed while he was looking at it. The assassin was taken to Sanjar, and accused a group of Fakhr al-Mulk's associates of complicity; they and the assassin himself were all put to death (IA X pp. 288–89).

Iqbāl (*Vizārat* p. 218) has pointed out that Mu‘izzī's *marthīya* gives the time of the murder as the early morning:

> No one saw this event which took place in the first hour of the day,
> when the sun in the east fell from its height.
> At daybreak [*bāmdād*] fortune and happiness had not disappeared;
> breakfast time [*chāshtgāh*] was lost in calamity and misfortune.
> (p. 736, ll. 16895–96)

Ibn al-Athīr presumably took his account from Ibn Funduq, and the timing seems more likely; on the other hand, Mu‘izzī was probably in Marv at the time of the murder. A tentative explanation is that if Fakhr al-Mulk was fasting, he would not have broken his fast until sunset, as in Ramaḍān; this might reconcile the two accounts. Mu‘izzī makes much of the coincidence of the deaths of Fakhr al-Mulk and Ḥusayn on the same day, and, perhaps not surprisingly, there is a slightly 'Alid flavour to the poem: 'On the day of 'Ashūrā, mourning, you were killed like Ḥusayn; through this good fortune you are twinned with Ḥusayn in martyrdom' (l. 16921). In this context, he suggests in another poem that Fakhr al-Mulk was equally respected by both Shī'ī and Sunnī; they praise him (the word used is *ghulū*) because God has given him the learning (*'ilm*) of 'Alī and the justice of 'Umar (p. 242, l. 5904). In the *marthīya*, however, the emphasis is on martyrdom. Fakhr al-Mulk is *shahīd bin shahīd* (l. 16911), yet another point of likeness to his father, and grief for him has destroyed the peace of mind of both the ruler and the army; but though the King of the East has lost a father-figure, he will have Fakhr al-Mulk as his intercessor on the Day of Judgment (l. 16924). The poem gives a strong impression of genuine personal grief, and in the final

line Mu'izzī says that his heart and soul have been so much affected by sorrow that he has renounced poetry (l. 16932).

Mu'izzī's poems to Fakhr al-Mulk contain an unusual amount of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, and, in spite of some repetitiveness, throw much light on the relations between poet and patron, as well as on Mu'izzī's view of his own craft. There seems to have been a degree of emotional involvement that is unusual in Mu'izzī's relationship with his patrons, and though he evidently felt respect and affection for Fakhr al-Mulk, he seems also to have found him a touchy and demanding patron. The situation is reminiscent of Farrukhī's relationship with Amīr Yūsuf. Abject expressions of devotion and anxiety to be accepted into the patron's service are a commonplace of court poetry, but the language used by Mu'izzī is sometimes 'over the top'.

> Mention of you and praise of you have been the *takbīr* in my prayers and on my rosary at the fast.
>
> (p. 469, l. 11049/p. 437)

> I put my face at your feet as a Christian does before the Cross, I kiss your hand as the pilgrim does the Stone.
>
> (p. 261, l. 6326/p. 255)

Though there are many expressions of gratitude for Fakhr al-Mulk's generosity, the only concrete example is in an early poem that links Fakhr al-Mulk, as Amīr of Khurāsān, with an unnamed brother (presumably Mu'ayyid al-Mulk), as Mu'izzī's benefactors: 'I have a horse in my stable, carpets in my house, clothes in my wardrobe, and gold in my purse' (p. 240, ll. 5862–63/p. 238). In another poem he sets out his terms of reference; he contracts to produce ('*aqd sāzad*) 'words with meaning [*lafẓ ba ma'nā*]' whenever required, 'to marry the brides of speech to (the patron's) generosity' (p. 131, l. 2955/p. 130). However, complaints about his shortcomings (*taqṣīr*) seem to have surfaced at a fairly early stage. While Fakhr al-Mulk was still amir, Mu'izzī was apologising for shortcomings in fairly light-hearted terms, and pleading mitigating circumstances (p. 261, l. 6234/p. 255). In two later poems, after Fakhr al-Mulk had been appointed vizier, first to Berkyārūq (p. 242/240), and then to Sanjar (p. 246/242), he seems to have taken these shortcomings more seriously (perhaps he was more conscious of his dignity), and, in the second poem at least, Mu'izzī apparently thought he was threatened with dismissal.

The reason for these complaints seems to have been that he was not always in attendance when required, perhaps because of his reluctance to leave his home in Nīshāpūr and follow Fakhr al-Mulk's wanderings. In 490/1097, Fakhr al-Mulk returned to Nīshāpūr and soon became Berkyārūq's vizier; he had kept Mu'izzī on his payroll during his absence, and the poet expressed deep gratitude but also fear of rejection (p. 245, ll. 5932 ff./p. 241).

Another poem (p. 469/437) seems to be in answer to a similar complaint. Mu'izzī says that he absented himself from Fakhr al-Mulk's court on grounds of delicacy, because his patron was suffering from an unspecified but deep personal sorrow. Fakhr al-Mulk was now Sanjar's vizier, and it appears from the *nasīb* and other references that the appointment was fairly recent. Mu'izzī justifies himself in a passage that illustrates the intricacy of the relationship, with a hint that Fakhr al-Mulk is being unreasonable (p .470, ll. 11102–9):

> O *mamdūḥ* of blessed judgment, panegyrists find wisdom of speech through praising you.
> I, your slave, in your service was important as an intimate [*khāss*]; when I was far from your service I was without importance, like an ordinary person [*'āmm*].
> Even if it had been a pleasure for me to be away from this service, I do not deserve a gift of reproach for this turn of events.
> I kept myself at a distance for a time because I saw you going through days of sorrow which were like night.
> I prayed that this darkness would pass from your day; the light of your judgment brought back a world without darkness.
> Although I am in person absent from your court, my pure soul holds firmly to the rope of your service.
> My tongue is always moist with the sweetness of praise of you, although I am dry-mouthed with the fire of separation from you.
> In daylight, I do nothing but sing your praises to people; when night comes, I do nothing but praise you in dreams.

The last poem which speaks of *taqṣīr* has been mentioned earlier, in connection with Fakhr al-Mulk's 40 years of public service and with descriptions of his palace (p. 246). Mu'izzī ends this poem with an emotional but self-justifying apology (ll. 5992 ff.) in which the word *taqṣīr* is used four times: 'Lord, if I've fallen short in many ways, let me apologize for these shortcomings, if you will believe me … Even though I've committed many sins of omission, speak, be kind, let me continue in your service'. The reason for Fakhr al-Mulk's displeasure is unknown; perhaps he objected when Mu'izzī wrote poems to other patrons. These and similar passages of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* nearly always occur towards the end of a poem, just before the *du'ā'*, and have nothing to do with the chief topics of the poem, though they are of considerable interest to the student of Mu'izzī's life and poetry.

The Mu'in al-Mulk of the last-mentioned poem was Mu'in al-Mulk Mu'ayyid al-Dīn Abū'l-Qāsim 'Alī b.Sa'īd Tāj al-Ma'ālī Bayhaqī, from the noble family of the 'Amīdīyān, mentioned at some length in the *Tārīkh-i Baihaq* (pp. 236, 461). Ibn Funduq says that he was the *nā'ib* of the vizier Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, but it is clear from a poem of Mu'izzī's that he

had also been Fakhr al-Mulk's deputy: 'You are the Shāh's *kadkhudā*, Mu'in is your *kadkhudā*' (p. 688, l. 15821/p. 620). According to Ibn Funduq, the great men of this house were holders of high office in Khurāsān, and books were written in praise of them. Mu'in al-Mulk had a brother, the *'amīd* Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusayn b.Sa'īd, who wrote a book on secretaries, and to whom Mu'izzī sent good wishes (p. 338, l. 8008/p. 320). Mu'in himself had no sons, but one of his brother's sons, 'Azīz al-Mulk Sa'īd, became *mushrif* of the kingdom (*mamlakat*) and *valī* of Ṭūs. Mu'in al-Mulk was the *mamdūḥ* of five *qaṣīdas* by Mu'izzī, which contain much of interest, especially their literary associations and qualities. These poems suggest that, rather unusually, the patron combined religious learning with a deep and informed knowledge of Arabic and Persian poetry, and in view of this, and more particularly, his close connection with Fakhr al-Mulk and his family, it has seemed appropriate to examine Mu'izzī's poems to him, together with one addressed jointly to him and to Sanjar on the occasion of a banquet given by him to Sanjar, before embarking on the poems addressed to Sanjar himself.

Mu'in al-Mulk's relationship with the family of Niẓām al-Mulk went back to the days of the great Vizier, to whom he also apparently acted as *nā'ib* (the term is a rather vague one). 'The *Khwāja* [Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad] has learnt to respect you from his grandfather [Niẓām al-Mulk] and his father [Fakhr al-Mulk]' (p. 413, l. 9765/p. 386). In another poem Mu'izzī says: 'Who but he was fit to be deputy to the two *Khwājas* who both governed the realm of the King of the World, Niẓām-i Dīn [Fakhr al-Mulk] in the reign of Malik Sanjar, Qivām al-Dīn [Niẓām al-Mulk] in the reign of Malik Sultan?'. The earliest of Mu'izzī's five poems to Mu'in al-Mulk, and the most interesting historically, was written for Naurūz (p. 658/596). The thirteen *bayts* of the *nasīb* all begin with a thanksgiving (*al-minnat lillah*), firstly, for the return of Khurāsānīs to the seat of power ('the sun of Khurāsān is shining again in the constellation of honour'); this is equated with the blossoming of the roses of Naurūz, which had died during the winter (ll. 15199–200), and is followed by thanks for the triumph of various prophets over dangers and difficulties, especially the victory of the prophet Muḥammad in Mecca. The *nasīb* concludes with thanks that a worthy *dastūr* is in the *dastūr*'s seat in the *dīvān* and that the *dīvān* itself is now adorned by a distinguished Khurāsānī. There is a veiled reference to problems with a rebellious enemy, corresponding to the troubles of the prophets in the *nasīb*: 'The enemy's foot kicked against the fetter [*band*] when the minister [*dastūr*], with our *Khwāja*, put his hand to the agreement [*paymān*]' (l. 15218). There is also an expression of regret for Mu'in al-Mulk's temporary absence from court.

The *nasīb* is perhaps a discreet allusion to the appointment of the two Khurāsānīs Fakhr al-Mulk and Mu'in al-Mulk as vizier and deputy respectively, after the dismissal of the Jibālī Ardistānī, and after Fakhr al-Mulk's period of idleness. The mention of the 'enemy' and of Mu'in al-Mulk's absence may be linked with Fakhr al-Mulk's mysterious *safar*, on which

Muʻin presumably accompanied him, and with the possible campaign in Khwārazm; in this context, Muʻizzī says several times that Muʻin is popular with the army (p. 336, l. 7994/p. 318; p. 612, l. 14216/p. 557; p. 658, l. 15224/p. 596). Why Muʻizzī should have worded his poem so obscurely is not clear; but, as so often, its meaning was no doubt plain to the recipient, and lack of supporting evidence, and perhaps also considerations of propriety (Ardistānī had also been an important patron) make it enigmatic to a modern reader.

Of the remaining four poems, one, already mentioned, in which Muʻin al-Mulk is named as deputy to Niẓām as well as Fakhr al-Mulk (p. 612, ll. 13196–97), must have been written while Fakhr al-Mulk was still alive, and possibly another one which says that Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad is satisfied with him, Niẓām al-Dīn Muẓaffar (Fakhr al-Mulk) is pleased with him (p. 336, l. 7994). The other two were almost certainly written during Sadr al-Dīn's vizierate; one of them refers to Muʻin al-Mulk's 30 years of service, as *nā'ib-i mubārak* to the Malik and to the *Khwāja* (p 724, ll. 16639, 16636/p. 651). Another passage praises him for his good works in the cities of Ṭūs and Sarakhs (p. 726, ll. 16649–50):

> What you have done in the city of Ṭūs and the city of Sarakhs will last as long as the world revolves.
> Where is that hero [*pahlavān*] who made Ṭūs and Sarakhs? He should admit that he is an apprentice and worship you.

There are several references to Muʻizzī's relationship with Muʻin al-Mulk, which appears to have been considerably more relaxed than with Fakhr al-Mulk, though he does once apologize for some short-coming, expressing shame and fear over a broken promise, for which he hopes to be forgiven: 'I committed a sin and came to you for shelter, to spread the shadow of pardon and generosity over my head'(p. 726, l. 16656). He seems to have found Muʻin al-Mulk a kind and generous patron, though occasionally dilatory in paying him: 'Although you've said "Bravo!" many times to my poetry, and although you've done me many kindnesses, more is needed now, for nothing is left!' (p. 614, l. 14228).

Muʻin al-Mulk's Khurāsānī origin, his interest in Ṭūs and Sarakhs and his long-standing connection with the family of Niẓām al-Mulk brought him into contact with Ghazālī. As mentioned earlier, he acted as Ghazālī's host and 'minder' when he was summoned to appear before Sanjar. He was the recipient of one of the *Faḍā'il al-anām* letters, which is not of much interest in itself except for a mention of Niẓām al-Mulk, but seems to hint that Muʻin al-Mulk, like his chief, enjoyed his pleasures. It is a homily on the importance of looking to the hereafter, involving the need for repentance, the avoidance of corruption and the renunciation of evil ways. Ghazālī's main purpose seems to be to persuade the elderly Muʻin al-Mulk to stop drinking wine: 'It is most unbecoming for hoary old age to drink strong liquor'. He

quotes the example of Niẓām al-Mulk, who, when he grew old, recognising the possibility of tyranny (*ẓulm*, a favourite word) and corruption inherent in the power of the vizierate, gave up wine-drinking for the rest of his life (p. 61).

Mu'izzī celebrated Sanjar's arrival in Khurāsān as governor in 490/1097 in a poem written long after the event: 'God, when He adorned the province of Khurāsān with [Sanjar's] justice in the year 90, gave him power and happiness' (p. 590, l. 13705/p. 539). It seems, however, that he did not in fact join Sanjar's service until some three or four years later, following the wanderings in search of patronage listed in Chapter 5. By this time Muḥammad and Sanjar had made an alliance that was to prove permanent; there is numismatic as well as textual evidence for Sanjar's transfer of alliance from Berkyārūq to Muḥammad on his coinage after 493/1100 (IA X p. 207; Lowick pp. 242, 246–48). It was clear that Berkyārūq, after the defeat in 493/1099–1100 and the death of his chief ally Ḥabashī, was unlikely ever to return to Khurāsān, and Mu'izzī was obliged to look to Sanjar for patronage. His earliest poems to Sanjar for which a date can be suggested are two which congratulate the prince on his recovery from illness, and must refer to the serious illness, 30 days in length according to Mu'izzī (p. 109, p. 283), which befell Sanjar on his return from his visit to Baghdād with Muḥammad in 494/1101 (IA X pp. 210, 239). Though Mu'izzī became Sanjar's chief court poet for the rest of his life, he never refers to himself as Sanjar's *amīr al-shu'arā*'; he does, however, say that he has had his *laqab* (Mu'izzī) renewed 'in your days, [the days of] *Mu'izz-i dīn u dunyā*' (p. 522, l. 12223/p. 482), Malikshāh's title which Sanjar adopted when he succeeded to the sultanate. Perhaps the title of *amīr al-shu'arā'* had lapsed after Malikshāh's death, or perhaps it was seen as a title for life, without need of renewal; at all events, it is frequently given to Mu'izzī by later writers. The *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, the most nearly contemporary of the histories, says that *amīr al-shu'arā'* Mu'izzī versified (*naẓm kard*) Sanjar's life and conquests, and the language used by the author in summarising Sanjar's achievements suggests that he had some knowledge of Mu'izzī's poetry. No other *ṣāḥib-qirān* (a favourite word of Mu'izzī's) had won so many victories, no other sultan had vanquished *khāndān-i Afrāsīyāb* (the Qarakhānids), the king of Ghazna, and the Maḥmūdīyān (the partisans of Sanjar's rebellious nephew Maḥmūd) (*Mujmal* p. 412; cf. Mu'izzī p. 286, l. 6850).

The watershed in Mu'izzī's poems to Sanjar is Sultan Muḥammad's death on 24 Dhū'l-Ḥijja 511/18 April 1118 (IA X p. 367; Bundārī 1889 p. 118), and Sanjar's elevation to the sultanate. The poems to Sanjar as *malik* seem, to the present writer at least, to have a lighter touch and more lyrical and literary qualities than the poems to Sanjar as sultan; on the other hand, they have notably less historical content, and references to actual events are often brief and obscure. There are several possible reasons for this. Sanjar was a young man during this period; though he was already a seasoned soldier, he was probably only 16 or 17 when he came back from Baghdad in 494/1101.

Many of the poems were composed for festivals, Naurūz, 'Īd al-Fiṭr and 'Īd al-Aḍḥā, very popular with the Seljuqs (Mihragān, so much beloved by the Ghaznavids, is never mentioned), or for entertainments given to Sanjar by viziers or other dignitaries, and their lively and graceful style was appropriate for the occasion, the guests, and the age of the prince. In addition, apart from Sanjar's major preoccupation at this time, the need to control any threat from beyond the Oxus and to suppress any attempt by the Qarakhānid khans to assert their independence from the Seljuqs, it seems that not much was happening in Khurāsān which was likely to be mentioned in panegyrics. The troubles of Nīshāpūr and Ṭūs, referred to by Mu'izzī in poems to officials and the subject of so much correspondence by Ghazālī, had no place in Mu'izzī's poems to Sanjar. The garden of Khurāsān flourishes as never before under the just rule of Sanjar; no news is good news. Ibn al-Athīr has little to say about Sanjar's activities during this period, until the death of Mas'ūd III of Ghazna in 508/1114–5 and the ensuing succession struggle between his sons gave Sanjar the opportunity to intervene on behalf of Bahrāmshāh, and to transform the balance of power in his favour on the eastern frontier. Though this took place in 510/1117, while Sanjar was still *malik*, nearly all the poems in which Mu'izzī celebrates the victory and describes the battle are addressed to 'Sultan Sanjar', and so must have been composed after Muḥammad's death a year later; they will be discussed with the other poems of Sanjar's sultanate.

It is not surprising that the most frequent historical topic in the *malik* poems is the victory over Qādir Khān at Tirmidh and relations with the Qarakhānids. Descriptions of the actual campaign, however, are scanty, and the poem to Ardistānī quoted in Chapter 5 is more informative than any of the poems to Sanjar. Two poems (p. 194/195) congratulate him on his triumphant return after defeating 'the army from Bālāsaghūn and the Khān from Tarāz' (p. 194, l. 4656), and thus following in his father's footsteps. The fate of Qādīr Khān is held up as an example to would-be traitors (p. 112, l. 2485) and the new Khāqān is presented as an obedient vassal who will undertake punitive action against Sanjar's enemies in Tūrān (p. 351). From Uzgend to Farāb (a village near Samarqand) the Khān and his family are subject to Sanjar (p. 488, l. 11501/p. 454), and Sanjar hunts lions on the banks of the Oxus (l. 11513). 'After four years the footsteps of his army are still fresh in Tūrān' (p. 646, l. 14958/p. 586, a poem which presumably dates to *c*.499/1105–6), and a *tarkīb-band* gives a picturesque description of the battle and the enormous booty which was taken: 'They took so much booty, mules, horses and sheep, that all three were cheap in Balkh and Samarqand and Bukhārā' (p. 747, l. 17168/p. 675). This is reminiscent of one of Farrukhī's poems, which lists the vast booty distributed to the army, and the correspondingly low prices it fetched in the bazaar, after the sack of Qannauj in 410/1019 (p. 229); the nomadic Qarakhānids' wealth, however, evidently consisted largely of livestock.

Other military activities are mentioned in passing. In one of the 'arrow' poems, to be discussed later, there are two references to a victorious battle in Khwārazm, which must be the mysterious campaign of the poems to Fakhr al-Mulk. Two poems mention Ghūr. In the first (p. 112, l. 2491) the fortress (*ḥiṣār-i Ghūr*) is proposed as a suitable objective for a *Ghāzī* king (some of the Ghūrids were pagans) and in the second, describing a banquet given by Fakhr al-Mulk to Sanjar, the capture of the fortress of Tūlak in Gharchistān, north of Herāt, by 'the *sipāhdār* and amīr who is under your command' is presented as a piece of good news from Ghūr (p. 353, l. 8340/p. 332). Fakhr al-Mulk was murdered in 500/1106–7, so this episode must have preceded the raid led by Sanjar in 501/1107–8, which reduced the ruler of Ghūr, 'Izz al-Dīn Ḥusayn, to vassal status (CHIR V p. 158; Jūzjānī pp. 336–37). Another reason why these references to battles are so vague may simply be Mu'izzī's own lack of information about them; Khwārazm and, in particular, Ghūr, were remote and little-known. It seems too that he never accompanied Sanjar on campaign, and some of his poems suggest that he was not always with Sanjar even in time of peace.

The close relationship between Muḥammad and Sanjar is nevertheless a subject which often crops up in these poems, sometimes associated with good relations with the Caliph al-Mustaẓhir. The joint visit of the two brothers to Baghdad in 494/1101 was, according to Mu'izzī, soon followed by caliphal endorsement of Sanjar's rule in Khurāsān. His name was to be in the *khuṭba* and on the silver and gold coinage (*sikka u dīnār*), and the Caliph sent him a standard and other regalia (bracelet, collar, belt, *jubba*, and turban) (p. 283, l. 6789/p. 274). Another poem is in rather similar vein: 'The one [the Caliph] has been aided [*mustazhar*, a play on the Caliph's name] by your influence, the other [Muḥammad] made happy [*mustabshar*, a play on the Prophet Muḥammad's attribute as bringer of good tidings] by good news of you' (p. 501, l. 11798). Sanjar is a partner with his brother in kingship (p. 96, l. 2032); Muḥammad rejoices in his *farr* (p. 356, l. 8428/p. 335) and in his ability, as Moses did in the skills of Aaron, his full brother (p. 586, l. 13607/p. 535). This comparison reappears in a poem almost entirely devoted to the friendship and cooperation between the brothers (p. 589/538); Sanjar is like Aaron and the Sultan (i.e. Muḥammad) is like Moses b.'Imrān. They exchange messengers reporting good news and victories, and their mutual affection is a source of pleasure to Malikshāh in the next world (1.13691). The emphasis on 'sultan' and '*malik*' in the poem suggests that it may have been written soon after Berkyārūq's death, when Muḥammad was accepted as sultan by Sanjar and recognized by the Caliph. Though Sanjar acknowledged his elder brother's primacy, with the unspoken understanding that he should be given a free hand in Khurāsān, and though he disregarded Muḥammad's attempt to dissuade him from intervening in Ghazna on the grounds that the Ghaznavids were an ancient and respected dynasty (Ḥusainī 1933 pp. 90–91), he seems to have felt genuine respect and affection for his brother, and this

feeling was promoted by their mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn. According to Ibn al-Athīr, Sanjar's reaction to the Sultan's death was an unprecedented display of grief and affliction. He sat in the ashes for the ceremony of mourning, closed the city (presumably Marv) for seven days, and ordered the *khātibs*, when they spoke of Muḥammad, to enumerate his virtuous actions, such as the struggle against the Bāṭinīs and the remission of taxes (IA X p. 385).

The third subject of interest in these poems is the relationship between Mu'izzī and Sanjar. Not many of the poems contain much *ḥasb-i ḥāl*. One celebrates a particular act of kindness and courtesy (p. 148, ll. 3390–91/p. 147).In another, which may postdate the arrow episode, he says he will constantly thank and praise Sanjar, though he is at present living at home (p. 194, ll. 4631–32). It seems that Sanjar was sometimes slow to pay him. After comparing the treasury of speech in his soul to pure gold, he says (p. 715, ll. 16412–13/p. 643) ' … let me tell you of my state … I ask for your help'. There was to be a violent interruption to the two men's relationship. On some unspecified date and occasion, Sanjar shot an arrow which hit Mu'izzī in the chest and injured him seriously enough to keep him away from court for a year. Mu'izzī's poetry is the only authority for this, although the three short but rather obscurely worded *marthīyas* on him by Sanā'ī suggest that it was a matter of public knowledge. On the other hand, Sanā'ī implies that the wound was the direct cause of Mu'izzī's death, which, as we shall see, did not in fact occur until some seven or eight years later. Mu'izzī speaks explicitly of the arrow-wound in six *qaṣīdas*, several *rubā'*īs and a *qiṭ'a*, and there may be indirect references to it in two other poems. Three of the *qaṣīdas* are addressed to Malik Sanjar, so the affair must have preceded his succession to the sultanate; of the other three, one is addressed to Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, one to Sharaf al-Dīn Sa'd b.'Alī, later Sanjar's vizier but probably at the time vizier to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, and one to Sadīd al-Mulk Safī al-Daulat 'Umar, named as the *'āriḍ* of Khurāsān.

Sadr al-Dīn and Sharaf al-Dīn were regular patrons of Mu'izzī, from whom he could expect sympathy and kindness; but Sadīd al-Mulk is something of a puzzle, as there are no other poems to him in the *Dīvān*. As *'āriḍ* of Khurāsān, he probably lived in Nīshāpūr and was an acquaintance of Mu'izzī; he may, however, be identical with a much better-known character, Sadīd al-Mulk Abū'l-Ma'ālī al-Mufaddal b.'Abd al-Razzāq b.'Umar, a member of the 'Gang of Three', Tāj al-Mulk Abū'l-Ghanā'im, Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī and Sadīd al-Mulk himself, who conspired against Niẓām al-Mulk and tried to unseat him. All three later held office briefly under the child Maḥmūd b.Malikshāh, and were lampooned by Abū'l-Ma'ālī al-Naḥḥās in verses that are quoted in the *Seljūk-nāma* (ZD pp. 34/52; Bundārī 1889 pp. 62–67). Sadīd al-Mulk was first '*āriḍ al-jaysh* and then promoted to be head of the *Dīvān-i inshā*', the position in which he figures in the lampoon. After the fall of Tāj al-Mulk in 486/1093, he apparently made his way

to Baghdad, and, for reasons which are obscure, was appointed as the Caliph al-Muqtaḍī's vizier in Ramaḍān 496/June 1103. He was soon dismissed, because, having spent his working life in the service of the Seljuq sultans, he was ignorant of the procedure of the caliphal secretariat. He was then imprisoned for a social misdemeanour, but was released in 497/1103–4, and fled to Berkyārūq, who made him *mushrif* over his dominions (IA X pp. 242, 248a, 249, 259). No more is known of him; he was evidently yet another natural survivor, and may well have ended up in Khurāsān as Sanjar's *'āriḍ*. His name as given by Mu'izzī does not entirely tally with the name given by Bundārī and Ibn al-Athīr; 'Umar is his, not his grandfather's name, and Mu'izzī does not give his *kunya*. However, two *bayts* in the poem show that he was an important official of Sanjar, perhaps with some connection with Iraq (p. 108, ll. 2359–60):

> Your writings [*sahīfeh-hā-yi tū*] are the law [*qānūn*] of the dominion of the Malik, your registers [*jarīdeh-hā-yi tū*] are the canon [*dastūr*] of the dominion of the Sultan.
>
> Let the 'Irāqis praise your handwriting and your style, for your handwriting and style are the adornment of Khurāsān.

None of these poems mention any other event which might help to fix the date of the arrow affair, and in neither of his two meetings with Mu'izzī, in 510/1116–7 and 514/1120–21, does Niẓāmī 'Arūḍī relate anything to suggest that Mu'izzī was not in good health. An account of the actual shooting from an unidentified source, which seems plausible though there is no supporting evidence for it, is given in the preface to the selection from Mu'izzī's poems in the famous fourteenth-century manuscript 'Six Dīwāns', the earliest manuscript of any of his poetry, copied in 713–4/1314–5, less than 200 years after his death. 'I (presumably the compiler) heard from a great man (*buzurgī*) that a group of spiteful and envious people at the court of the Sultan (*sic*) slandered Mu'izzī and made the Sultan suspicious of him. In a state of drunkenness, he shot three arrows at him, and at each one Mu'izzī recited a *rūbā'i*, all of them very good. This story is confirmed by the incomparable Ḥakīm Sanā'ī in his *marthīya*. 'Mu'izzī says more than once that Sanjar's arrow hit him by mistake, and this would agree with the compiler's story; but the story could have been invented to fit the facts as presented by the poet, as indeed could the version given by Sanā'ī. The matter must remain open.

The most important of the 'arrow' poems are addressed to Sanjar (p. 575/526) and to Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (p. 378/354). In both of them, as in the poem to Sharaf al-Dīn, the *nasīb*, demonstrating in an unusual context its function of attracting the sympathetic interest of the *mamdūḥ*, is a meditation on the arrow attack and on the mercy of God. It should, however, be emphasised that nowhere does Mu'izzī relate what actually happened, and all the poems appear to have been written at least a year after the event,

when he was again able to appear in public and present his poems in person. He is extremely careful never to blame Sanjar for the accident or to criticize him in any way; in fact, he almost treats the affair as a blessing in disguise. He attributes his recovery to the miraculous powers of the Shāh, his *farr* and his fortune, and to the blessedness (*mubārakī*) of his hand and his arrow (p. 575, ll. 13382–83). He describes his heart as a treasury of praise for the Shāh, with the arrow-point, which according to another poem, was permanently lodged in his chest (p. 108, l. 2366) as the guardian of the treasure (ll. 13386–87). Even though his body suffered for a year, the end of the affair was its own reward: 'I know the virtue [*faḍl*] of God and the *farr* of my lord' (l. 13389). After the *gurīzgāh* and a passage of praise, he returns to the subject, rejoicing that he is now able to come back to duty in Sanjar's *majlis* (ll. 13418–19). It seems that Sanjar, perhaps from feelings of guilt, rewarded him handsomely (ll. 13421–24). 'My life is yours, and if you give me the signal, I'll pour out my soul today on your gold-bestowing [*zarafshān*] hand.'

The poem to Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (p. 378) is very similar in lay-out. Mu'izzī begins with repeated thanks to God for his recovery, for which he also gives credit to the Vizier as well as the Prince. He has much more, however, to say about the seriousness of the accident and his nearness to death, and he says that his sufferings, though undeserved, were sent by God as a warning (*i'tibār*) to men (ll. 8900–902, 8904):

> People say the next world is hidden from this world; I saw the next world plainly in this world.
> Sometimes I saw the likeness of Israfil's trumpet on my right; sometimes I saw the phantom of Azrael's sword on my left.
> I was dead, the Shāh, like Jesus, restored me to life; like David, he made the iron as soft as wax in my breast [cf. *Qur'ān* XXXIV, 10f].
> My body saw the dawn, after nights of misery; my soul saw the shore, from an ocean of woe.

As in the previous poem, he goes back to the topic after a passage of praise, with warm expressions of gratitude for the Vizier's kindness; but he ends on a lighter note, explaining that he has vowed not to drink wine in future, because his constitution cannot take it, and he asks Sadr al-Dīn to hold him excused (ll. 8934 ff.).

The poem to Sharaf al-Dīn begins with a very brief (three-*bayt*) but pertinent *nasīb* on the poet's troubles, with an elegant use of word-play (p. 308, ll. 7345–47/p. 295):

> There is no secret about the affair of the sovereign's arrow [*tīr-i shahriyār*] and that black [*tīreh*] day which befell me last year.
> If last year my day was blackened by the arrow [*az tīr tīreh būd*], this year it is brightened by the sun of the time.

And afterwards, when I was on the threshold [*sharf*] of death, I was saved by the fortune of the honour of the faith [*sharaf-i dīn*] of the Creator.

After a long passage of praise Mu‘izzī returns to the subject in the *ḥasb-i ḥāl* slot, as he had done in the two previous poems and was to do in others (p. 310, ll. 7384–89, 7390–91):

O sun of the heavenly sphere, for one year the sphere did not revolve according to the desire of my heart.
That year has gone, and through your *farr*, in another year I've obtained what I hoped for.
If the sovereign's arrow hit my body by mistake, because of the sovereign's fortune my life was not in danger …
I recovered, because in that accident I had your support as my physician, your fortune as my dear friend [*ghamgusār*].
In your presence the night of my pain disappeared, when you appeared the daylight of my joy became manifest.

The remaining three poems, two to Sanjar and one to Sadid al-Mulk, contain less of note. The first poem to Sanjar (p. 573/524) is not, strictly speaking, about the arrow episode, but it is obvious from the content that the subject is very much on Mu‘izzī's mind. The *nasīb* is a 26-*bayt* meditation on *tauhīd* and the power and mercy of God, similar to the prologue to the *marthīya* on Ardistānī's son (p. 363/342), and the four lines of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* (p. 575, l. 13367 ff.) express his desire for leave of absence and an increase of stipend. The other poem to Sanjar (p. 488/454) is nearly all about his victories (the 'Uzgend to Farāb' passage was quoted earlier), but three lines of *ḥasb-i ḥāl* refer to the arrow (p. 490, ll. 11532 ff.):

Because your slave had a heart like an arrow in worship of you [*parastish-i tū*], his life took no harm from the wound of your arrow.
If your good fortune had not helped your slave, his existence in time would have been annihilated.
Your *farr* warded off, and your favour eased, the affliction of the wretched, the sickness of the infirm.

The last poem, to Sadīd al-Mulk, may be incomplete, as there is no *nasīb* and it begins abruptly with his title; it ends with a passage assuring the patron that in spite of the arrow-wound, Mu‘izzī can still write good poetry (p. 108, ll. 2365–70).

As for the short poems, the five *rubā'īs* (pp. 800, 813, 815–16, 817) are all variations on the theme of the arrow and Mu‘izzī's sufferings. In the three-line *qiṭ'a* he comments ruefully on his mistaken praise of Sanjar's arrow:

> I praised the Shāh's arrow in verse; he thanked me and proudly let it fly.
> It came and kissed my breast; it went, and left the point in my breast.
> I don't know how long my breast will keep this deposit.
>
> (p. 790)

Finally, two other *qaṣīdas*, one to Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad (p. 477/444), and the other to Shihāb al-Islām 'Abd al-Razzāq (p. 174/176), are so similar in language to the poems already quoted that, as Iqbāl suggests, they probably refer to the arrow incident, though they do not explicitly mention it.

In sum, although the 'arrow' poems are interesting in that they are concerned with an event of major importance in Mu'izzī's life, the study of them is frustrating because they give virtually no concrete information about it. Mu'izzī's care not to offend Sanjar or in any way to present him as blameworthy, and the conventions of decorum that generally preclude much mention of the poet's personal troubles in panegyric poetry, especially if it is addressed to a ruler, veil in graceful and opaque language, with much use of word-play and metaphor, an act of apparently thoughtless brutality or carelessness which had a permanent effect on the elderly poet's health. Other stories about Sanjar suggest that he was sometimes given to sudden acts of violence, usually when under the influence of alcohol, which he later had cause to regret. Mu'izzī frequently expresses the belief that Sanjar's innate charisma, the royal *farr*, which sometimes extends to his ministers, and his 'fortune' (*daulat*, *iqbāl*), have played a major part in his recovery; the wound inflicted by the king can best be cured by the king.

7

MU‘IZZĪ

The final phase. Life under Sanjar as Sultan, 510/1117 to *c*.518/1124–27

The poems to Sanjar as sultan and their background will now be considered, followed by the poems to the members of his family and vassals, most of whom were also connected with him by marriage, and, finally, the poems to the viziers and other senior officials who held office during the remainder of Mu‘izzī's life. As several of these officials were Mu‘izzī's patrons before Sanjar became sultan, this will involve a certain amount of back-tracking and repetition, but it has seemed sensible to treat each group of poems to one patron as a whole, regardless of date. When Sanjar succeeded Muḥammad, his position on the international scene, to put it in modern terms, underwent an enormous change. For 20 years he had been a provincial ruler, albeit a very powerful one, the 'march-lord' of the eastern frontier; he was now *sulṭān-i mu'aẓẓam*, the ruler of an empire extending from Transoxania almost to Baghdad, which had been even further enlarged by the acquisition of the Ghaznavid domains of Afghanistan. Accounts of Muḥammad's death-bed, as we have seen, suggest that he saw his son Maḥmūd as his heir; but he must have been aware that Sanjar would enforce his primacy over his nephew, as indeed he did at Sāveh in 513/1119 (IA X pp. 387–89). The change in Sanjar's status is reflected both in Mu‘izzī's poetry and in his *mamdūḥs*. He is no longer just the poet of a young prince and his officials; he is the poet of the dynasty, as Rūdakī was of the Sāmānids, expected to compose panegyrics to vassals and allies. There is a change too in his poetic style; the light touch and lyricism of some of the earlier poems has been replaced by a heavier and more fulsome style. Mu‘izzī was now an old man, probably about 70 when Sanjar became sultan, and the poems of his latter years, though historically interesting and, as always, professional and competent, are not in general among his most attractive or memorable compositions.

The two major military campaigns in these later poems were Ghazna and Sāveh. After Malik Arslān or Arslānshāh seized the Ghaznavid throne in Shawwāl 509/February 1116 (Bosworth 1977 pp. 92–94), his brother Bahrāmshāh took refuge first with Arslānshāh of Kirmān, and then with

Sanjar. Sanjar sent him with an army commanded by Amīr Oner to reclaim his inheritance and Tāj al-Dīn Abū'l-Faḍl Naṣr b.Khalaf, *malik* of Nimrūz, the ruler of Sīstān, joined them at Bust. In an engagement near Bust, the Seljuq army defeated a force assembled by Malik Arslān, who made an unsuccessful attempt to buy off Amir Oner. Sanjar now set out in person, and a major battle took place on the plain outside Ghazna, which Ibn al-Athīr calls Shahrābād, and is probably the Shabahar of Farrukhī and Bayhaqī, on which Maḥmūd used to review his army (IA X p. 354). Malik Arslān's army included 120 elephants (100, according to Muʿizzī), which caused panic among the Seljuq troops, until Abū'l-Faḍl of Sīstān, with great personal courage and presence of mind, demonstrated how to kill the elephants by stabbing them from below. This turned the tide, the Ghaznavid army collapsed, and Malik Arslān fled to India. Sanjar entered Ghazna on 20 Shawwāl 510/25 February 1117 on horseback, with Bahrāmshāh walking in front of him, in a visibly subordinate position, until they reached the palace, where Bahrāmshāh was allowed to take his place on the throne. The *khuṭba* was read in the name of the Caliph, Sultan Muḥammad, Malik Sanjar (much to the surprise of the local people, according to Ibn al-Athīr), and Bahrāmshāh as sultan. After 40 days, Sanjar left Ghazna with enormous quantities of loot, the accumulated wealth from the Indian conquests of the Ghaznavid sultans. But very soon after his army had departed, Malik Arslān and his forces returned and reoccupied the city; Bahrāmshāh fled in panic to Bāmiyān and appealed to Sanjar for help. Sanjar did not come himself, but sent another army, and Malik Arslān, despairing of holding the city against the Seljuq forces, left it after a month's occupation. He was subsequently captured by one of Sanjar's commanders and handed over to Bahrāmshāh, who had him strangled in Jumāda II 511/October 1118 (IA X pp. 353–56).

Muʿizzī's first references to Ghazna are in two poems, one to Sanjar and one to Bahrāmshāh, almost certainly written in the same year and possibly for the same occasion, a meeting between the two princes to settle the details of the Ghazna campaign. The poem to Sanjar is for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr, probably Shawwāl 509/March 1116, at about the time when Malik Arslān seized power. After the usual compliments, Muʿizzī comes to what is evidently the real subject of the poem, the arrival of Bahrāmshāh in Marv and the prospect of a campaign to install him in Ghazna, on Sanjar's terms; he will be Sanjar's vassal, like the Qarakhānid Khān of Turkestan (p. 494, ll. 11631–32, 11634 ff./458): 'You [Sanjar] can put him on the throne of kingship, for you, throughout the world, are a king who makes kings [*malik-i malik-nishān*]'. Muʿizzī addresses Bahrāmshāh directly as Fakhr-i Mulūk in the second of the two poems (p. 288), and it seems to have been one of his early titles, though Gulam Mustafa Khān, who did not use Muʿizzī as a source, does not mention it (p. 63). Muʿizzī then speaks about the relationship between the two princes and their fathers in language similar to that used in the first

poem (ll. 6927–28), and anticipates a successful campaign through 'the fortune of the King of the East'.

Two more poems on or relating to the conquest of Ghazna were composed while Sanjar was still *Malik*, one to Sanjar himself and one to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn. The poem to Sanjar (p. 202) begins with a short but lively description of the battle and of the victorious army: 'The swords of the Malik's army in the ranks of the battle shone and burned like fire today' (l. 4862). The battle in question is evidently the first engagement, near Bust (l. 4860), not the second and final battle outside Ghazna, in which Sanjar took part in person; nothing is said of his presence there, as it is in the other poems. The cause is righteous; the Ghaznavid army has been spurred on by envy, the Seljuq army by justice. There is some emphasis here and in other poems on the multi-national nature of the Ghaznavid forces, Kurds, Arabs, Ghaznavīs, Khalaj and Indians (l. 4865), displaying the unspoken implication that at least some of these are infidels and, therefore, a legitimate target for a Muslim army. Mu'izzī does not mention the major battle (perhaps he was leaving it for another poem), but turns to the status of Bahrāmshāh. He deserves the kingdom not because of his ancestry, but because Sanjar has placed him there; he will put Sanjar's name in the *khuṭba* and on the coinage, and send elephant-loads of gold and jewels every month to Sanjar as tribute (ll.4879 ff.). A more prosaic version, given in the *Seljūk-nāma*, is that Bahrāmshāh had to pay a thousand dinars every day to Sanjar's treasury from the city of Ghazna's customs-duties (*furdāt*), and an '*āmil* was appointed to Ghazna to collect the money (ZD pp. 44/80).

The second poem, to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn (p. 555/509), celebrates four joyful events: the 'Īd (unspecified), springtime, the conquest of Ghazna, and the arrival of the Khātūn's cavalcade, presumably in Marv, after a happy and successful visit to Iṣfahān (l. 12951), apparently to visit Sultan Muḥammad. She is congratulated on having two sons like Moses and Aaron, a familiar comparison (l. 12942), and her 'fortune' is held to be a major factor in Sanjar's victorious career. The victory at Ghazna is evidently very recent. Mu'izzī looks forward to further victories, in India, and to the arrival of vast wealth from Ghazna, caskets of jewels, bags of gold and silver and other treasures, and livestock – droves of horses, elephants and dromedaries (ll. 12955 ff.). This poem can, for once, be dated fairly precisely. It was almost certainly composed for 'Īd al-Aḍḥā 510/15 April 1117; 'Īd al-Fiṭr, early in February that year and nearly three weeks before Sanjar's ceremonial entry into Ghazna, seems unlikely. The cheerful tone of the poem implies that Muḥammad was in good health at the time of his mother's visit, and this too makes spring 1117 the most likely date; by the following spring he was mortally ill.

Of the several poems of Sanjar's sultanate that make more than a passing reference to the capture of Ghazna (pp. 86/85, 151, 196, 205, 520/480, 554/509), the earliest is probably a short one instructing a newly arrived

cupbearer to give Sanjar wine in a golden cup to celebrate the conquest (p. 554, ll. 12923 ff./p. 509). The longest and most detailed is a highly coloured, very literary but imprecise description of the battle outside Ghazna and its aftermath (pp. 196 ff.). It seems very doubtful whether Mu'izzī ever accompanied any of his patrons on campaign, even in his younger days (cf. Chapter 4); he certainly had no first-hand experience of the Ghazna campaign, though he probably had access to people who had taken part in the battle. He was evidently familiar with the battle poems of earlier poets; the introduction to the present poem (p. 196) begins with an adverse comparison between Alexander and Sanjar that was obviously inspired by Farrukhī's Somnath *qaṣīda*. Another long poem (p. 520/480) begins in a similar vein, with a short passage on the battle, followed by a line depicting Sanjar (not Bahrāmshāh) sitting on Maḥmūd's throne in the Bāgh-i Pīrūzī (l. 12204). The scene then changes to Balkh, with messengers coming to Sanjar's court from the three major vassal states, Kirmān, the Qarakhānid khanate, and Ghazna. The poem ends with a reference to the hot climate of Balkh, a passage in praise of wine, and good wishes.

Two more poems, though not primarily about the Ghazna campaign, devote several lines to it. The first (pp. 151 ff.) begins with a short meditation on the achievements of the race of Seljuq, from their origin in New Bukhārā (l. 3482) to their present glory; then there is a short passage on Ghazna, followed by praise of Sanjar. There is also a mysterious reference to a visit to Sanjar's court by 'the King of the Arabs [*shāh-i 'arab*], from Arabia' (l. 3514). The only person who would have held this title at the time was the Mazyadid prince Dubais b.Sadaqa, whose father Sayf al-Daula Sadaqa (d.501/1107–8) was known as the King of the Arabs (CHIR V p. 115). Mu'izzī is the only source for such a visit, which, on the face of it, seems unlikely in view of the distances involved; but according to Bundārī, Dubais had been in Sanjar's service for ten years, and had only recently returned to Iraq, apparently after Muḥammad's death (Bundārī 1889 pp. 121–24). Ibn al-Athīr says that he was sent to the Caliph after the battle of Sāveh to have the *khuṭba* read in Sanjar's name, on 26 Jumāda I 1513/mid-September 1119, and there are other indications that he was regarded as an ally by Sanjar and a political counter-balance both against Maḥmūd and the power of the Caliph al-Mustarshid (IA X p. 389). The second poem to Sanjar, who is addressed by Alp Arslān's title of Burhān Amīr al-Mu'minīn, and congratulated, in a passage of some 20 lines (p. 205, ll. 4949 ff.), on the victory at Ghazna, against enemies described as treacherous Indians and sorcerers, and also on the valour of the army, matching horsemen against elephants, on the immense booty, the treasures of Maḥmūd and his sons, brought out by camels and mules (l. 4961), and on the conquest of Ghazna after 130 years of empire. The occasion for the poem appears to have been the celebration of the circumcision of the son of the *sipāhsālār* Amīr Sonqur Beg 'Azīzī (l. 4974), and Mu'izzī ends the poem with a short passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, warmly praising Sanjar's generosity and kindness to him.

Recurring topics in these poems are Sanjar's personal courage, especially outside the gates of Ghazna (p. 86, p. 151), the racial admixture of the Ghaznavid troops, represented as a source of evil and pagan practices, the astonishing wealth of Ghazna, mentioned in almost every poem with various picturesque details, and the elephants. These were apparently accepted as baggage-animals, but in their role as instruments of war, perhaps unfamiliar to inexperienced troops, they were at first sight objects of great fear, and Mu'izzī makes the most of this. They are shaped like the shadow of the Sīmurgh (p. 520, l. 12195/p. 480), they are brave and swift-moving, dark, hideous, terror-striking. They are variously compared with a wave of the sea with a ship on it (presumably the *howdah*), full of *dīvs* plotting evil, to a catapult firing arrows instead of stones, and to Mount Sinai, with serpents shining like the hand of Moses (could these be the tusks?); the spear-throwers on the elephants' backs are like *'ifrīts* scattering fire (p. 198, ll. 4707–10, 4712/p. 199). But Sanjar's success is seen as inevitable, the will of God and of fortune, and even the climate caused him little inconvenience, although (p. 198, ll. 4736–37)

> In Dey [December/January] and Bahman [January/February] it was so cold in Ghazna that the wind was like a file, and the water like marble.
> The air was as black with cloud as the banner of the 'Abbāsids, the mountains and the valleys were as white with snow as the Egyptian [Fātimid] banner.

The invasion of Iraq, which culminated in the battle of Sāveh, halfway between Rayy and Ḥamadān, in Jumāda I 1513/August 1119 (there is some discrepancy in the sources over the exact date), was the last campaign of note conducted by Sanjar in Mu'izzī's lifetime. The circumstances, a war between uncle and nephew, made the subject a delicate one, and in contrast to the numerous poems on Ghazna, Mu'izzī addressed only one major victory poem to Sanjar on the battle (pp. 198 ff.), though he refers to it in half-a-dozen others, and writes of it at length in poems to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn (p. 557/511), and to the current vizier, Shihāb al-Islām Abū'l-Maḥāsin 'Abd al-Razzāq (p. 484/450). The coverage of the affair by the principal sources varies very much in length and in emphasis. The *Seljūk-nāma*, Bundārī, and Ḥusainī, whose account follows Bundārī's very closely but in a much simpler style, are chiefly concerned with events before and after the battle, and have very little to say about the battle itself. On the other hand, Ibn al-Jauzī, very briefly, and Ibn al-Athīr, at considerable length and with a rather different slant from the other writers, describe both the battle and the forces involved, and Ibn al-Athīr's very detailed account indicates that the victory was a narrow one.

The two armies at Sāveh were unevenly balanced. Maḥmūd had 30,000 men, with the advantage of knowing the ground and the location of water

supplies, but his two chief commanders, 'Alī Bār and the *atabeg* Mengubars, were bitter enemies and often contradicted each other's orders (Bundārī 1889 p. 125). Sanjar had only 20,000 men; but he had 18 elephants (40, according to Ibn al-Jauzī), whose presence was to prove decisive. His commanders were two very senior and devoted amirs, Qumāj and Oner; his vassals the son of Abū'l-Faḍl of Sīstān, and the Khwārazmshāh Muḥammad; and his brother-in-law 'Alā' al-Daula Garshāsp b.Farāmarz (*sic*), the son of Mu'izzī's first patron 'Alā' al-Daula 'Alī b.Farāmurz (Ibn al-Athīr has omitted one generation), the ruler of Yazd, whose *iqṭā'* in Fārs had been confiscated by Maḥmūd and given to his cupbearer (Bosworth 1970 p. 88). Ibn al-Jauzī, who seems to show some bias against Sanjar, says his army included thousands of Bāṭinīs and heathen Turks (vol. IX p. 205). Maḥmūd's army was at first successful, as the Khurāsānī forces were disheartened by their numbers; but Sanjar then brought his elephants into play, and Maḥmūd's cavalry fled in terror, followed by the rest of the army. Maḥmūd retreated to Iṣfahān; Sanjar proceeded to Ḥamadān, and made peace proposals, as his army was small and he was reluctant to engage in further hostilities. He was supported in this by his mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, who was in Rayy, and advised him to treat Maḥmūd leniently, but effectively as one of his vassals. After further negotiations, Sanjar promised to make Maḥmūd his *valī-'ahd.* Maḥmūd came to Rayy, where Sanjar's court was now established, in Sha'bān 513/ November 1119, and stayed with his grandmother. He brought huge presents for his uncle, which Sanjar accepted in public but returned in secret, only keeping five Arab horses. He treated his nephew with honour and kindness, and formally notified his domains and the Caliphate in Baghdad that Maḥmūd was to be his heir. He restored all Maḥmūd's territory to him except Rayy, which was retained as a vantage point and an insurance against further forays (IA X pp. 387–89).

This rosy picture, with its emphasis on Sanjar's magnanimity, unwillingness to fight his nephew to the death ('Don't frighten the boy with elephants!') and desire for peace, does not in fact tell the full story. Before he accepted Maḥmūd's peace overtures and apologies, Sanjar insisted on very public and humiliating ceremonies of submission, which lasted a month, according to the *Seljūk-nāma*, and are described there and in Bundārī/ Ḥusainī (ZD pp. 45/81; Bundārī 1889 pp. 128–29; Ḥusainī 1933 pp. 88–89; CHIR V pp. 135–36). This process was intended to demonstrate to the world that Sanjar regarded Maḥmūd not as Muḥammad's successor as sultan, but as his vassal, who must 'kiss the ground' before him, hold his bridle when he mounted his horse, and walk beside him while he rode, just as Bahrāmshāh had done on entering Ghazna. Ibn al-Athīr, however, does not record this, any more than Mu'izzī does in his poem to Sanjar on Sāveh, or in the poem to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, in which he describes the battle and praises Sanjar's clemency, but does not mention the lady's part in the process of reconciliation. As Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn did, Mu'izzī equates Maḥmūd's position with

Sanjar's Ghaznavid and Qarakhānid vassals: 'There are three rulers, in India and 'Irāq and Turkestan, who all three hold power by your gift' (l. 4834). An interesting aspect of this poem is the deliberate echoing of 'Unṣurī's Hazārasp *qaṣīda* (cf. Chapter 3) especially in the *nasīb.*

Another poem that has much on Sāveh is addressed to the Vizier, Shihāb al-Islām Abū'l-Maḥāsin 'Abd al-Razzāq, a nephew of Niẓām al-Mulk who had been appointed by Sanjar in Dhū'l-Ḥijja 511/April 1118, after the murder of Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, and held the vizierate until his death in Muharram 515/March 1121. Mu'izzī begins by hailing the patron as 'the man who took the two 'Irāqs with the nib of his pen' (p. 484, l. 11390/p. 450), and launches immediately into the subject of the poem, congratulations to Shihāb al-Islām and detailed praise of his success in making peace between uncle and nephew (ll. 11392–93). It was natural that Mu'izzī should give Shihāb al-Islām, a patron of long-standing and a member of a family with which he had been associated for most of his poetic life, the credit for the restoration of peace, and no doubt the Vizier played some part in the negotiations and the relevant correspondence; but it appears from the *Seljūk-nāma* and Bundārī that the initiative came from Maḥmūd's side. According to the *Seljūk-nāma*, 'Alī Bār sent Darguzīnī to Sanjar to make Maḥmūd's apologies and ask for terms. Bundārī, on the other hand, transmitting the views of 'Imād al-Dīn and Anūshīrvān b.Kḥālid, both bitterly hostile to Darguzīnī, attributes the happy outcome to the efforts of Maḥmūd's vizier Kamāl al-Mulk Sumairamī, who circumvented Darguzīnī's attempts to play the leading role (ZD pp. 81/106–7; Bundārī 1889 pp. 128–29; Klausner 1973 p. 54). Mu'izzī, however, is not concerned with the Iraqi side; for him, the Vizier's hard work and the Sultan's magnanimity have ended the war and prevented further slaughter (ll. 11415–16), and this success has been crowned by caliphal recognition of Sanjar in the *khuṭba* and on the coinage (l. 11426).

When Sanjar left Iraq, he did not in fact, as implied by Ibn al-Athīr, give back all Maḥmūd's territory. He retained the northern provinces of Māzandarān and Ṭabāristān, whose ruler, the Bāvandīd Ispahbad 'Alī b. Shahriyār (511-*c*.536/1117~8–42), the *mamdūḥ* of two of Mu'izzī's poems (pp. 103/102, 313/299), was Sanjar's brother-in-law and reluctant vassal (EIr 'Al-e Bavand'), and also kept Qumis and Dāmghān, on the western marches of Khurāsān. He apparently did not return to Khurāsān until early summer 514/1120, after a visit to Baghdad for which Mu'izzī appears to be the only source. Mu'izzī's poem (p. 162/162) suggests that the Nīshāpūrīs had little notice of his arrival and were surprised and delighted to see him (ll. 3812, 3815):

> O you who have come unexpectedly [*nāgāh*] to Nīshāpūr from Baghdad,
> When news of your coming reached Nīshāpūr, people said that surely God had sent the prophet Jesus from the fourth heaven back to earth!

Sanjar is praised for having acted like a king and a man in Baghdad (*ay tākhteh shāhāneh u mardāneh bi-Baghdad*) (l. 3822). Khurāsān's prosperity is attributed to his fortune and his rule (l. 3830), and the month of Khurdād (22 May–21 June), when he arrived in Nīshāpūr, is honoured by his coming (l. 3836). The du'ā' perhaps hints at the reason for his visit to Baghdad: 'Your name is an adornment to the *khuṭba* and the coinage, may it remain in the *khuṭba* and on the coinage' (l. 38). Though the Caliph al-Mustarshid had already been requested to put Sanjar's name in the *khuṭba*, it seems that there had been some delay, or possibly some argument about the wording, which could only be resolved by Sanjar's presence in person. At any rate, Ibn al-Jauzī records that in Muharram 514/April 1120 the *khuṭba* was read in the name of the two sultans, Sanjar and Maḥmūd together, each of whom was named as Shāhānshāh (vol. IX p. 216).

At some unspecified date, probably soon after Sanjar's return to Khurāsān, Maḥmūd came to visit him, to receive the diploma for his appointment as *valī-'ahd* and to marry one of Sanjar's daughters; several of Mu‘izzī's poems relate to this event. It appears from one of the poems to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn (p. 291/280) that a marriage between Maḥmūd and a daughter of Sanjar had been arranged during the lifetime of Sultan Muḥammad. The poem was written for an unnamed ‘Īd, probably in spring 510/1116 or even a little earlier, and Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn is warmly praised for her generosity to the young couple. It is not clear whether this was a marriage or merely a betrothal between children. According to the *Seljūk-nāma* and *Rāḥat al-sudūr*, Maḥmūd was married successively to two daughters of Sanjar; the first, Māh-i Mulk or Muhmalik Khātūn (also named as Mahd-i Maymūn) (*Mujmal* p. 415), died at the age of 17, and Sanjar sent her sister, Amīr Siti Khātūn, in her place, but she too died young, in 516/1123 (ZD pp. 53/106–7; *Rāḥat* p. 205; IA X p. 421). The text of *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* implies that both marriages took place after Maḥmūd's war with Sanjar; on the other hand, both texts of the *Seljūk-nāma* give the impression that there was an interval, perhaps of some years, between the first marriage and the second, and this would be more consistent with Mu‘izzī's poem.

However this may be, it seems certain that Maḥmūd married one of Sanjar's daughters when he was made *valī-'ahd*, and Mu‘izzī wrote poems to three patrons, including Maḥmūd himself, which evidently refer to this occasion. Two to Darguzīnī, who was later notorious for corruption, praise him in extremely fulsome terms for the major part he appears to have played in bringing about the ceremonies (p. 324, ll. 7728–31/p. 308). In the second poem, Mu‘izzī suggests that Darguzīnī wrote the marriage contract with his own hand (p. 570, ll. 13259, 13261/p. 522). In the first of these poems, Darguzīnī is given vizieral titles (*ṣadr-i vazīrān, dastūr-i dādgār*, p. 324, l. 7712), and is compared with the Arab Barmakīs and the Persian Bal'amīs (l. 7725). This was presumably in virtue of his position as ‘Alī Bār's *kadkhudā* or vizier, as he did not become Maḥmūd's vizier until 518/1124, long after

the events to which Mu'izzī must be referring, and his brief period as Sanjar's vizier, in 526/1131–2, was almost certainly after Mu'izzī's death.

The other two *mamdūḥs* of poems relevant to this occasion were Amīr Tughāyrak and Maḥmūd. Amīr Fakhr al-Dīn Tughāyrak b.Alizan had been one of Berkyārūq's amirs, hostile to Majd al-Mulk Balāsānī, and had supported Berkyārūq's infant son Malikshāh's claim to the sultanate after his father's death (IA X pp. 197, 262). He had been with Anūshīrvān b.Khālid on his unsuccessful peace mission, and it seems from Mu'izzī's poem that Maḥmūd again used him in a diplomatic role, to collect the *valī-'ahd* agreement, possibly in company with Darguzīnī, as the wording of the poems to both of them is similar (p. 207, ll. 5025, 5027–28). The poem ends with an agreeable passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, which suggests that poet and patron were old friends, and also that the contract was signed not in Marv, but in Balkh, where, judging by various references in Mu'izzī's poetry, Sanjar spent much time (p. 209, ll. 5033–34, 5036–37, 5042): 'Long since, my heart, desiring you, was like a thirsty field longing for rain. What joy was in my heart today, when I made my way to Balkh'.

Mu'izzī's two poems to Maḥmūd do not explicitly mention this occasion, but are almost certainly related to it. In both of them, he emphasises the joy of Sultan Muḥammad in Paradise now that his son is (Sanjar's) *vali-'ahd* (p. 153, l. 3535; p. 155, l. 3587/p. 154), perhaps a discreet riposte to any suggestion that Sanjar had usurped his nephew's rights. Maḥmūd is not named as sultan, as was apparently done in the *khuṭba*; he is always Shāh Maḥmūd. The second of these poems was evidently written when he was in Khurāsān visiting Sanjar, and, according to Mu'izzī, being treated with honour and kindness, and welcomed by the people of Khurāsān; the poem ends with an unusually long *du'ā'*, wishing him every blessing. The first poem, however, is the more interesting of the two, as it throws light on Mu'izzī's career, and on his high opinion of his own poetry and his public standing. It appears that Maḥmūd sought Sanjar's leave before commissioning poems from Mu'izzī, an unheard of thing to do; in the event, neither party seems to have been wholly satisfied with the outcome, for reasons that are not entirely clear (p. 154, ll. 3569–74/p. 154):

> To ask Mu'izz al-Dīn [i.e. Sanjar] for homage from Mu'izzī – did any other king but you ever dare to do it?
> There is no poet like Mu'izzī in the east and the west; everyone who is wise knows this.
> The panegyrics he brings you are all rare; the *qaṣīdas* he makes for you are all brilliant [*gharrā'*, the standard adjective].
> Even though he is far away he sees you in his mind's eye; anyone whose mind's eye is clear-sighted sees far.
> Even though he is old he becomes young when he comes to you, because there is a young fortune with him and guiding him.

> And even if he is disappointed in what he longs for, it is not surprising, for in his praise there are thorns as well as dates.

The most important member, after Sanjar, of the Seljuq royal family in Khurāsān was his mother Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn Ṣafarīyya, slave-born (*jāriya-zāda*) (ZD pp. 34/55), whose pacific and charitable nature and practical common-sense appear to have been in strong contrast with the leading characteristics of Malikshāh's two royal wives. Like them, she seems to have been of Turkish origin; in the *du'ā'* of a poem to her Mu'izzī tries out his modest knowledge of Turkish (p. 157, l. 3636): 'May the eyes and faces of those who are envious of her be like silver and gold [i.e. white and yellow], as long as silver and gold in Turkish are *yarmaq* [the Turkish word for dirham, according to Kāshgharī] and *altun*'. Her first appearance in history is in 493/1100, after the battle of Naushajān between Berkyārūq and Sanjar. Berkyārūq's forces were defeated, but they captured Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, who was terrified, fearing that Berkyārūq might kill her in revenge for the murder of his mother Zubayda Khātūn by Mu'ayyid al-Mulk. Berkyārūq reassured her in somewhat contemptuous terms; she was not worth killing, as she was not the equal of his mother, but she would be useful as a bargaining counter to induce Sanjar to release his prisoners. When he did so, Berkyārūq let her go (IA X p. 202). This may possibly have some bearing on an extremely mysterious passage in one of Mu'izzī's poems to her (p. 8, ll. 128 ff./p. 24):

> When the *farr* of your fortune shone on mother and brother, they both escaped from the claws of the enemy.
> After they had both been wandering in the desert, now they have been walking with you in the garden of faith [*bagh-i dīn*].
> The unbelief of them both has become belief, their pain has found a remedy, their sufferings a respite, their thorns have become dates!
> If you look at this story, this tale, it is more wonderful than the story of Yūsuf, the tale of Zulaykha.

Whether this is an actual or metaphorical event, perhaps an act of conversion, and who the mother and brother are, is impossible to guess, though Mu'izzī's tone seems to suggest that it was something well-known. Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, as depicted in Mu'izzī's poems, was a notably devout woman, and she built *'imārat* (religious complexes – 'Imams live there to study, *faqīhs* dwell there to gain knowledge') in Marv and Nīshāpūr (p. 102, l. 2165/p. 100; p. 291, ll. 6971–72/p. 280). Seven of Mu'izzī's nine poems to her were written during the lifetime of Muḥammad, and a constant theme is the mutual trust and affection of the two brothers, fostered by their mother (p. 156, ll. 3612–14).

In what appears to be the earliest poem he wrote to Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn (p. 7/23), Mu'izzī says he has been a panegyrist of kings for thirty years. If this is to be taken literally, the date of the poem should be *c*.496–7/1103–4,

before the death of Berkyārūq; this would be consistent with the general tone of the poem, which speaks of the two princes as on a par, neither superior to the other. Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn is the mother of two Khusraus, both adornments of the world, *Shāh-i jahān* Muḥammad, *Shāh-i zamāneh* Sanjar, who have no compeers; the one is *pādshāh-i 'ādil*, the other is *shāhriyār-i dānā* (p. 7, ll. 112–13, 116/p. 23). She has made it her business to keep the peace between her sons: 'Because of the many prayers you made in secret to God, there is peace and reconciliation between the princes' (l. 120). Similar sentiments are expressed in other poems (p.101, l. 120/p. 24, l. 3), and the glory of Sultan Muḥammad in Iraq and Malik Sanjar in Khurāsān is all due to her (p. 712, l. 123/p. 640). In the poem on the conquest of Ghazna, quoted earlier, she is, rather puzzlingly, credited with three children (*seh farzand*, l. 129), who have conquered the world. The *Seljūk-nāma* records that she and Malikshāh had a third son, who died in childhood (ZD p. 35/53). It has been suggested that this may be a reference to Maḥmūd Khān of Turkestan, Sanjar's nephew and adopted son (see Anvarī 'The tears of Khurāsān', *Dīvān* pp. 201–5). The only other known member of her family was Shāh Khātūn Safīya, to whom Mu'izzī addressed a poem describing her as 'daughter of the late Sultan, sister of the present Sultan' (evidently Sanjar, as only one brother is mentioned), and the mother of Seljūk Shāh (p. 558, ll. 13006, 13019/p. 512). The only Seljūk Shāh known at this time was a son of Muḥammad who presumably died young, as he played no part in the quarrels between the other sons of Muḥammad; but if Shāh Khātūn was Muḥammad's full sister (and the poem implies that she was Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn's daughter) she could not have been the mother of his son. A tentative solution to the problem is that she was a secondary wife of Muḥammad (his chief wife was Guhar Khātūn), who was accepted as a daughter and sister by Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn and Sanjar respectively. Later in this poem (l. 13033), Mu'izzī says he has been a panegyrist to the dynasty for 40 years; this must be an approximate figure, as Sanjar did not become sultan until 511/1118, some 45 years after Mu'izzī's first meeting with Malikshāh.

Other points of interest in these poems are, on the technical side, the absence of *nasībs* in all of them, and the length of the *du'ā's*. On the linguistic side, although Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn is often compared with such famous Islamic ladies as Khadīja, Fāṭima and Zubayda, she is several times addressed as *khudāvand*, a word usually applied to men, and praised in terms more appropriate to a male potentate (p. 157, ll. 3629–30):

> When her exalted cavalcade [*maukib*] enters royal Marv, it inspires terror in Tarāz and Bālāsaghūn [the eastern Qarakhānid capitals].
>
> And when her cavalcade leaves Marv in victory, the dust of her encampment extends to the shores of the Sayhūn [the Syr Darya].

The long passages on the Ghazna and Sāveh campaigns in the poems on pp. 554/509 and 557/511 respectively suggest that she took a lively interest in public affairs, though praise of Sanjar's victorious career could be construed as an indirect way of praising his mother. She was kind and generous to Mu'izzī; she apparently gave him a *khil'at* on one occasion (p. 292, l. 6984/p. 281), and he speaks of her with deep gratitude and respectful affection. A late poem, possibly the last one he addressed to her, suggests that she may have suffered from heart trouble: 'You should not need medicine for the heart from doctors; always make the virtues of God medicine for your heart' (p. 292, l. 6984/p. 281). She died in 515/1121, and her grandson Maḥmūd held mourning ceremonies for her in Baghdad, the like of which had never before been seen (IA X p. 419). Sanjar's reaction to her death is not recorded, but Mu'izzī wrote a fine and moving *marthīya* for her which reflects the general grief (pp. 492–93).

Mu'izzī's poems to the four major patrons of his final years, the viziers who followed Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad in fairly rapid succession, contain little of historical interest, though they have autobiographical content, mostly on his age and declining health. This may have affected the quality of his poetic output, as, with a few exceptions, the poems of this period are not among his more interesting compositions; the men to whom they were written, chosen somewhat haphazardly by Sanjar, were also not among Mu'izzī's more notable patrons, and, with the exception of Kāshgharī, comparatively little is known about them. The first of these viziers, Shihāb al-Islām Abū'l-Maḥāsin 'Abd al-Razzāq (511–15/1118–21), the son of Niẓām al-Mulk's brother Abū'l-Qasīm 'Abdullah, was a religious scholar and *faqīh*, and is not known to have held any previous position in the bureaucracy; he must have been by now an elderly man, and seems a strange choice for the vizierate. Very little is known about his life. According to the *Tārīkh-i Baihaq*, at the time of his father's death in Sarakhs in 499/1105–6 he was briefly in prison in Tirmidh for some unspecified offence (p. 244). He seems to have spent his subsequent life in Nīshāpūr, in a senior religious capacity ('*Khwāja Imām, ṣadr-i a'yān-i Nīshāpūr, rā'īs-i ru'asā*", p. 463, ll. 10924–25/p. 432), and it was probably during this period that he became Mu'izzī's patron; at least four of Mu'izzī's eight poems to him appear to have been composed before he became vizier (pp. 380/356, 461/430, 463/432, 559/513). Ibn al-Athīr comments that he was not as highly regarded as his cousin and predecessor, Fakhr al-Mulk's son (IA X pp. 385–86), and Sanjar himself, in a surprisingly frank overview of his viziers given to Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk Kāshī and recorded in *Athar al-wuzarā'* (pp. 248–51), described him as a man of evil conduct and unpleasant nature.

Mu'izzī, on the other hand, always anxious, as appears from the Sāveh poem, to make the most of the career of a patron who had been generous to him, says that during the Ghazna campaign, before he became vizier, Shihāb al-Islām had impressed Sanjar by his skill in budgeting (*taqdima*, p. 302, l.

7205/p. 289). His close relationship with the family of Niẓām al-Mulk and the general belief in that family's inborn capacity no doubt influenced the Sultan's choice. A major theme of nearly all Muʿizzī's poems to Shihāb al-Islām is his relationship to Niẓām al-Mulk and his right to high office because he has inherited his uncle's virtues, and also the glory that the connection of this great vizieral family with Nīshāpūr has brought to the city of Muʿizzī's birth. In a poem to Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, he had said 'Because of your *farr* the city of Nīshāpūr now takes pride of place over royal Marv' (p. 670, l. 15469/p. 606). To Shihāb al-Islām he says that the house of Niẓām is superior to the great Nīshāpūrī families of Najm and Mikāl (the family of Ḥasanak): 'Najm should be your slave, Mikāl your *ghulām*' (p. 464, ll. 10932–33/p. 432). Congratulating Shihāb al-Islām on his appointment, he calls on the north wind as it blows from Balkh to Nīshāpūr to give Niẓām al-Mulk the news that his nephew has been made vizier; Iqbāl points out this line proves that Niẓām al-Mulk's final resting-place, after a preliminary interment in Iṣfahān, was in the family grave in Nīshāpūr (p. 301, l. 7183/p. 289) (*Dīvān* p. 301, note 1; *Vizārat* p. 50). There is also emphasis on the Persian-ness of the family. Shihāb al-Islām is *rā'īs-i mashriq*, *imām-i ʿajam* (p. 381, l. 8957/p. 357), and he and his father are the pride of the Persians, just as the Prophet is of the Arabs (p. 462, l. 10888/p. 431).

Another recurring theme is Shihāb al-Islām's expertise in ʿ*ilm* and *fiqh*, accompanied with patronage of deserving religious dignitaries. He is praised for his kindness to 'every *faqīh* who frequents the mosque and *madrasa*, every imam who is worthy of the *minbar* and the *ṭaylasān*' (p. 561, l. 13070/p. 514). A curious point in one of these poems, which predates the vizierate, is that it was apparently written for ʿĪd-i Ghadīr, a festival not mentioned anywhere else in Muʿizzī's *dīvān*, and which is held on 18 Dhū'l-Ḥijja to commemorate the nomination of ʿAlī at Ghadīr Khumm as the Prophet's successor (p. 381, l. 8976/p. 357). This Imāmī Shīʿī festival seems an unusual occasion on which to eulogise Shihāb al-Islām, who came from a strongly Sunni family, and was anathema to Shīʿīs because he had ordered the execution of a well-known Shīʿī preacher (EI[2] 'Ghadīr Khumm'; Iqbāl *Vizārat* p. 248).

The conventional erotic *nasībs* of these poems and the absence of references to Persian poets or *Shāhnāma* characters suggest that Shihāb al-Islām was not much interested in Persian poetry; the only poets mentioned in Muʿizzī's poems to him are the Arabs Jarīr and Farazdaq (p. 382, l. 8983), and Buhturī and Abū Tammām (p. 464, l. 10940/p. 432). This also seems to have been true of his successor, Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Ṭāhir Saʿd b.'Alī b.'Īsā Qummī, who died after holding office for only a year (Muharram 515–Muharram 516/March 1121–March 1122). Sharaf al-Dīn had been Muʿizzī's patron for a number of years before he became vizier (one of the 'arrow' poems [p. 308/295] was addressed to him), and several of the 11 poems of which he is the *mamdūḥ* evidently pre-date his vizierate. Although one of

these poems (p. 384/360) is a *guftam/guftā* dialogue in the style of 'Unṣurī and Farrukhī, references in the other poems suggest that Sharaf al-Dīn's primary interests were in Arabic literature, both religious and secular, and confirm Khwāndamīr's statement that he was deeply religious and skilled in Islamic law (*mutasharri'*) (p. 190). His journey from Marv to 'the Shāh's court' (Sanjar was presumably in Balkh, which he used almost as a second capital) is compared with the Prophet's journey from Medina to the mosque of Aqsā (the 'night journey') (p. 727, l. 16685/p. 653), and later in the same poem Mu'izzī introduces a favourite topos of Arabic poetry:

> If the compositions [*inshā'*] of the Arab poets were inspired by ruins [*talal*], I'm inspired by the praise of your virtues.
> Describing your felicity [*sa'ādat*] and your qualities is better than the tale of Su'da, the story of Salma [heroines of early Arabic love poetry].
>
> (p. 728, ll. 16705–6)

The 'ruins' topos is a major feature of much the most striking of these poems (p. 597/545, *ay sarbān manzil mā-kun juz dar diyār-i yār-i man*), a famous tour de force. The 28-*bayt nasīb* is an Arabic style *raḥīl*, in which the speaker begins by calling on the camel-driver to halt at the deserted encampment of his beloved, so that he can lament over the desolate remains and the memory of his lost love. The vivid description of the ruins, now the haunt of birds of prey and wild beasts, is quoted most effectively, though totally out of context, by Ẓahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī in the *Seljūk-nāma*, followed by Rāvandī, to illustrate the destruction inflicted on his native city of Nīshāpūr by the Ghuzz after they defeated and captured Sanjar in 548/1153 (ZD pp. 51/99–100; *Rāḥat* pp. 182–83). Su'da and Salma are again mentioned in this poem, with the addition of Layla (l. 13875), as are Ma'n b.Za'da and Sayf b.Dhū'l-Yazan, two Arab heroes of legend (p. 598, ll. 13879–80, and p. 563, l. 13109/p. 516), whom the patron outdoes in fame, being as much respected in Khurāsān as the Tubba', the ancient king, was in Yemen. Finally, a more recent Arabic writer is cited as a potential panegyrist: 'Your life would adorn a history book [*daftar-i tārīkh*] if Muḥammad b.Jarīr [Ṭabarī] were alive in your time' (p. 396, l. 9330/p. 369).

Comparatively little is known of Sharaf al-Dīn's life and career. According to *Athār al-wuzarā'* he left Qum for Baghdad and entered the service of Malikshāh's *'āriḍ* Muhadhdhib al-Dīn while Malikshāh was encamped nearby, probably during his first visit to Baghdad in 479–80/1086–7. In 481/1088, he was sent to Marv to investigate complaints of oppression by the current *'āmil,* with the title of Wajīh al-Mulk that occurs several times in Mu'izzī's poems (pp. 384/360, 396/369, 726/653). He was apparently appointed in the *'āmil's* place, and for the rest of his life took a lively interest in the affairs of Marv. He was later made vizier or *ṣāḥib-dīvān* (the sources

vary on the title) to Sanjar's mother, and also *'āriḍ al-jaysh* (pp. 235–36). According to Ibn al-Athīr, he was an enemy of Niẓām al-Mulk, and when he became vizier he persuaded Sanjar to instruct Maḥmūd to arrest and imprison his own vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk's son Shams al-Dīn 'Uthmān, who was later executed (IA X p. 433). A little more information can be gleaned from Mu'izzī's poems to him. He had no son (p. 104, l. 2270/p. 104). He was a kind and generous patron to Mu'izzī but apparently demanded extremely fulsome praise in return. He is credited with having cleared Persia (*'ajam*) of oppression and disorder (*fitna*), just as the Arab Prophet cleared the Ka'aba of Lat and 'Uzza (p. 723, l. 16586/p. 650; cf. Farrukhī's Somnath *qaṣīda*, *Dīvān* p. 71). He is also said to have played a part in converting non-Muslims in India: 'You put thirty Qur'āns in India in the place of idols … You empty India of idol-temples and Brahmins' (p.598, ll. 13889–90). The sources shed no light on the circumstances or the accuracy of either of these claims. There are two clear references to his position with Tāj al-Dīn Khātūn, though Mu'izzī does not specify what it is. He has won the approbation of the Khātūn's *majlis*, perhaps a veiled reference to the lady herself, and the thanks of the Shāh and the Vizier (p. 396, l. 9327); in the *du'ā'* of another poem, evidently written during the vizierate of Sadr al-Dīn Muḥammad, Mu'izzī expresses the hope that Shāh Sanjar, the Khātūn and Sadr al-Dīn in this world, and Muḥammad, Zahrā (Fāṭima) and Bu'l-Ḥasan ('Alī) in the next world will all be pleased with his patron (p. 562, l. 13139/p. 515).

The last two viziers who were Mu'izzī's patrons, the Turk Kāshgharī and the Persian Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk Kāshī, though very unlike, were each linked by a connection with Amīr Qumāj, the most powerful and influential of Sanjar's generals, who had been sent to Khurāsān with Sanjar as his *atabeg* in 490/1097, and became his *ḥājib-i buzurg*/*amīr al-umarā'*, taking part in the battle of Sāveh and other major military operations. Niẓām al-Dīn (al-Mulk) Yabghū Beg Muḥammad b.Sulaymān Kāshgharī has already been mentioned briefly as an immensely wealthy Turkish crony of Sanjar, having bought the vizierate from him for a million Nīshāpūrī dinars, and winning the support of Amīr Qumāj by bribery. The historians, Ẓahīr al-Dīn, Bundārī and Ibn al-Athīr, barely mention him. The biographers, 'Uqaylī (p. 236), following *Nasā'im al-aṣḥār*, and Khwāndamīr (pp. 191–94), at much greater length, have not a good word to say about him, and expatiate with gusto on his ignorance, evil nature, unpleasant appearance, and dishonesty. The source of their information is not known; some allowance should perhaps be made for Persian prejudice against Turks, particularly against one who was occupying what was regarded as an exclusively Persian preserve. Sanjar did not repeat the experiment, and after a series of short-lived vizierates (Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk, 518–21/1124–7; Marwazī, 521–6/1127–31; Darguzīnī, 526–7/1131–2), he returned to the 'old guard', and in 528/1133–4 appointed Fakhr al-Mulk's son Abū'l-Fatḥ Ṭāhir, who held the vizierate for the next 20 years.

Mu'izzī addressed two poems to Kāshgharī, one a routine expression of congratulations, from which 'Uqaylī and Khwāndamīr quote three lines (p. 311, ll. 7401–3), and another longer one, engaging and lively, full of the usual lavish praise – 'His origin is in Tūrān, his court is in Irān; for all eternity Tūrān and Irān will be proud of him' (p. 10, l. 159/p. 25), and also of literary allusions, including a reference to Qatrān (ll. 189 ff.), which were probably above the patron's head. In praising Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk Mu'izzī was back on familiar ground, in view of a family connection that went back to the reign of Malikshāh. He had addressed four agreeable but otherwise unremarkable poems (pp. 122/121, 127/126, 452/421, 643/583) to a certain Abū Ṭāhir Ismā'īl Safi-yi *pādshāh/sultān/haḍrat-i Shāh-i jahān* (the title varies), an inhabitant of Iṣfahān (p. 643, l. 14885), a *dabīr* and expert calligrapher (l. 14900), in favour with Mu'izz al-Dīn (Malikshāh) and Qivām al-Dīn (Niẓām al-Mulk) (l. 14895). The only information on this man is in a passage in the *Seljūk-nāma*, a tailpiece to the account of Sanjar's reign (ZD 52/104), which reveals that he was a notable of Kāshān, comparable with the Barmakids (*sic*), and the maternal uncle of Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk. He had been *kadkhudā* to Amir Qumāj, but came to a violent end, murdered by one Turushk or Turshak Sawābī, on whom Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk demanded vengeance.

The link with Amir Qumāj continued; Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk was made his deputy (*nā'ib*) by Niẓām al-Mulk, with the duty of administering his numerous *iqṭā's.* He later held various posts under Sultan Muḥammad (*ṭughrā'ī* and *mustaufī*), but got into difficulties and was out of work for some years. Bundārī, evidently quoting the sharp-tongued Anūshīrvān b. Khḥālid, as his later assessment of Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk in a list of Sanjar's viziers is bland and favourable, says that he was a man without intellectual qualities (*mu dim al-fadā'īl*) and dictated his letters, because he was unable to write five lines in Persian, let alone Arabic (Bundārī 1889 p. 89). However, he impressed Sanjar when the Sultan was in Iraq for the Sāveh campaign, and Sanjar appointed him governor of Rayy, where he was a successful administrator and brought much money into the Sultan's treasury. After the dismissal of Kāshgharī Sanjar persuaded the reluctant Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk to leave Iraq and take the vizierate ('Uqaylī pp. 248–51). Mu'izzī wrote three poems to him, a short one with references to his previous career (p. 157), and two congratulating him on his appointment (pp. 68, 564/517). The first of these is the most interesting (none of them contain much of historical note), as it ends with a passage of *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, which appears to throw light on Mu'izzī's declining health, and suggests that he is more or less in retirement; he speaks with gratitude of the patron's acceptance of his excuses, his grief at being unable to appear in person, and his thanks for the patron's generosity (ll. 1333–38).

The date of Mu'izzī's death is not known, but the absence of poems to any vizier after Mukhtaṣṣ al-Mulk strongly suggests that it occurred during his

vizierate. Several poems from about this period refer, directly or otherwise, to his reluctance or inability to travel from his home to the patron's court. In only one poem to Sanjar, apart from the 'arrow' poems, does he mention his health as the reason for his failure to come to the Sultan's court. He apologises for not coming to Balkh in the summer; because of his age and infirmity, he cannot face the long hard journey, and he welcomes Sanjar's return to Marv and the coming of winter (p. 516, ll. 12127–31 ff./p. 477). In two poems to Sharaf al-Dīn Qummī (p. 397, ll. 9342 ff./p. 370; p. 722, l. 16612/p. 649) he apologises for his *taqṣīr* (presumably his failure to be present in person to pay his respects), but he gives no reason for this. Sanā'ī's three brief *marthīyas*, which, as has been pointed out, seem to attribute Mu'izzī's death to Sanjar's arrow, are the only surviving contemporary comments on his death (Sanā'ī *Dīvān* pp. 1051, 1058, 1099).

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